Understanding Culture in Social Movements: A Historical Materialist Approach to the Guy Fawkes Mask

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Abstract

Social movement scholarship has been slower to incorporate cultural theory than other domains since the 'cultural turn' within social science and the humanities. The leading perspectives in this regard, within studies of social movements, have been frame alignment and those looking to understand 'new social movements'. While these bring culture into focus through a wealth of literature since the 1970s and 1980s, this thesis argues that they remain inadequate in understanding the full role of culture. While the former rely too heavily on static, overly instrumental, powerless and voluntarist notions of culture, due in part to their early affiliation with the resource mobilization paradigm, the latter create an altogether too ideational notion of culture, overlooking the importance of material distribution and one's social position in the production and reproduction of culture. It is the contention of the author that social movement scholarship requires a more comprehensive and holistic approach to culture. This thesis therefore offers an original contribution in arguing for a historical materialist approach to social movements and culture that foregrounds the ideas of Antonio Gramsci and Raymond Williams. This perspective, by contrast, provides an approach to culture that is dynamic, historical, and appreciative of the role of power. In order to show the added value and utility of a historical materialist approach to culture, this thesis provides a detailed and concrete application of the theory to a specific social movement and its use of popular cultural artefact that has received growing attention in recent years for its apparent worldwide diffusion: the Guy Fawkes mask. Through a protest event analysis this research first of all establishes the extent of this diffusion and thus the mask's significance across diverse protest groups. In order to explore the practice of adopting the mask in more detail, this research uses one of the main contexts in which the mask has been employed for further analysis: the Occupy Movement (specifically Occupy London). Through interviews with participants of Occupy London, this research makes the argument that popular cultural forms are made available for use over time through previous human activity, and therefore that their use is both enabled and constrained by wider social and material factors. It also argues that the mask's availability as a practice is subject to cultural contestation and its capacity, due to these wider contextual factors, to resonate with different groups. The argument in this thesis is that existing approaches (such as framing and new social movement theories) fail to bring about such necessary discussions around culture, and that through a historical materialist framework it is possible to more sufficiently analyse the power-laden, conditioned, and ever-changing basis from which such practices emerge and diffuse.

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Chapter One. Introduction.

This thesis argues that social movement theory would benefit from a historical materialist approach to culture, drawing specifically on the ideas of Antonio Gramsci and Raymond Williams. Despite the 'cultural turn' witnessed in social movement theory in the 1980s (c.f. Snow & Benford, 1992; Tarrow, 1994), and the prevalence of cultural framing perspectives (c.f. Benford & Snow, 2000; Noakes & Johnston, 2005; Snow & Benford, 1988; Snow, Benford, McCammon, Hewitt & Fitzgerald, 2014), social movement scholars continue to be impeded by approaches to culture that are static, overly individualist, devoid of power, and, crucially, fail to appreciate the constraints of the wider culture out of which meaning is produced. This thesis therefore constitutes an important theoretical contribution to the field by arguing for and developing an alternative perspective for thinking about culture and social movements. This perspective, by contrast, provides an approach to culture that is dynamic, historical, and appreciative of the role of power. In order to show the added value and utility of a historical materialist approach to culture, this thesis provides a detailed and concrete application of the theory to a specific social movement and its use of popular cultural artefact that has received growing attention in recent years for its apparent worldwide diffusion: the Guy Fawkes mask. I establish the extent of this diffusion and thus the mask's significance across diverse protest groups using a protest event analysis. In order to explore the practice of adopting the mask in more detail, I select one of the main contexts in which the mask has been employed for further analysis: the Occupy Movement (specifically Occupy London). Through interviews with participants of Occupy London, I make the argument that popular cultural forms are made available for use over time through previous human activity, and therefore that their use is both enabled and constrained by wider social and material factors. I also argue that the mask's availability as a practice is subject to cultural contestation and its capacity, due to these wider contextual factors, to resonate with different groups. My argument is that existing approaches (such as framing and new social movements) fail to bring about such necessary discussions around culture, and that with a historical materialist framework it is possible to more sufficiently analyse the power-laden, conditioned, and ever-changing basis from which such practices emerge and diffuse.

Over time and in relation to the academic and wider social environment, the understanding of social movements and protest has dramatically changed, leaving a relatively large vocabulary with which to approach the subject. One of the most important of these shifts has been the propulsion toward culture, attributable largely to the wider shifts in this

direction, for example the 'cultural turn' in the humanities and social sciences (Bachmann-Medick, 2016; McLennan, 2014). This thesis is a direct engagement with the current context of social movement studies and the limited progress made in understanding culture. Overall, and as above, I argue – using a particular empirical example from a specific movement – that social movement theory still struggles to comprehend the importance of culture, and that the theories most often employed for this are not up to the task for a variety of reasons. To overcome this, I draw upon the historical materialist tradition, though in a later form that ensures a full appreciation of the cultural dimension. Within this chapter, I will introduce the project in more detail, making clear the various directions taken. First, I will give a brief account of the cultural turn, in order to show the importance of understanding culture more generally. Second, I will discuss the 'cautious' cultural turn within social movement studies, and how social movement theory has (inadequately) come to terms with culture since that moment. Following this will be a short exposition of this project's empirical contribution, in relation to the theoretical contribution. The final section will include an overview of each individual chapter in this thesis, incorporating the project's relevant research questions.

1.1 The Cultural Turn: The Importance of Culture

The 'cultural turn' or 'turn to culture' constitutes 'one of the most influential trends in the humanities and social sciences in the last generation' (Jacobs & Spillman, 2005: 1). Of course, any notion of a 'cultural turn' is overly simplistic, as it has subsumed within it many different moments, such as an 'interpretive turn', a 'performative turn', a 'reflexive turn', and so on (Bachmann-Medick, 2016: 1). However, the term remains practically useful in its recognition of a period where *the cultural* came to be prioritised, with a number of deeply felt manifestations. Examples of this include a rigorous questioning of the social, depictions of culture moving in the direction of 'symbolic, linguistic, and representational' systems, the emergence of 'seemingly inevitable methodological and epistemological dilemmas', and the collapse of comprehensive 'explanatory paradigms' (Bonnell & Hunt, 1999: 6). Du Gay (1997) presents two levels upon which culture has taken on an enhanced position within the humanities and social sciences. The first, at the epistemological level, is its ascent to an important analytical category – *the* analytical category in many cases – where the development of social knowledge is analysed for its cultural prerequisites. Nash (2001: 78) argues that within sociology this translates to culture being considered 'universally constitutive of social relations and identities'. The second pertains to changes in what is being *analysed*, and is therefore substantive (Du Gay, 1997), or historical (Nash, 2001), as culture *becomes* more influential, with a higher level of determination, and thus a central

part of our social lives. These, the substantive and the epistemological, are very much interrelated, though different theorists may detach them. For example, Jameson discusses an apparent change in the fabric of society[1]:

> '[t]he very sphere of culture itself has expanded, becoming coterminous with market society in such a way that the cultural is no longer limited to its earlier, traditional or experimental forms, but is consumed through daily life itself, in shopping, in professional activities, in the various often televisual forms of leisure… Social space is now completely saturated with the image of culture' (1998: 111)

To some, the change in society depicted here necessitates analytical development and a rethink of epistemological basis. This is characteristic of the shift from 'modernism' to 'postmodernism', which would lead to 'openly idealistic approach[es] to the study of cultural phenomena' (Rojek & Turner, 2000: 636). Culture, in this move, and underpinned by post-structuralist thought, becomes prioritised and in its most idealist forms can be considered absolutely determining.

While one need not accept all the postulations of postmodern thought, the important point here is the changing importance of the culture concept. Indeed, the prioritisation of cultural analysis around this time was emerging elsewhere. The growing field of Cultural Studies, for example, was using many of the tools of structuralism and post-structuralism to better understand cultural practice and its relation to, and embeddedness within, wider historical conjunctures. The interdisciplinarity of this field is testament to the increasing importance of culture in the academic world. A hugely diverse arena, developing through its radical eclecticism via a prolonged engagement with Marxism, its students at Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies looked to the 'relations between a subordinate and dominant culture' and the cultural 'negotiations', 'resistance', and 'struggle' that form this relationship (Clarke, Hall, Jefferson & Roberts, 2006: 34). Here everyday practices were seen as invested with power, and analysis often involved a semiotic approach – the 'politicisation of signification' – to 'deconstruct' or understand cultural life (c.f. Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke & Roberts, 1978; Hebdige, 1979; McRobbie, 1989; Willis, 1978). Such analyses incorporated culture at various levels of determination, the majority on the basis of historically-located practice. Across much of the social sciences, then, processes of social and cultural signification were clearly becoming part of the intellectual agenda. As Friedland and Mohr claim:

[1] Jameson's (cf. 1991) work engages more with the substantive side of postmodernism and its impact on commodification than any supposed epistemological break.

> ‘Organizational theorists, long comfortable with conceptualizations of structure and strategy that depended on objective notions of resource relations, understood through competition and conflict, differentiation, and symbiosis, have increasingly recognized the conventional, and indeed fictional, quality of many organizational forms and strategies. Institutionalists who once looked to culture as rushing in where rationality failed, where means-ends relations were uncertain or technologies untried, now increasingly recognize that culture plays a constitutive role in shaping organizational structures, strategies and technologies’ (2004: 1-2)

This prominence and recognition was clearly felt within the study of social movements, as culture returned as an important aspect of theorising. I will argue, however, this emerging emphasis falls short of accounts in other fields.

1.2 Turning to Culture in Social Movement Theory

In line with the wider cultural turn, and the notion that ‘it is through culture that everyday life is given meaning and significance’ (Chaney, 1994: 7), there has certainly been change within social movement theory. Johnston and Klandermans carefully depict the mood within social movement studies in the 1990s, stating that:

> ‘[l]ooking backward, we see familiar terrain: organizations, resources, structural preconditions, networks, and rational choice. The view that lies ahead is less clear. Definitions of culture abound, although it is not difficult to extract common denominators: customs, beliefs, values, artifacts [s*ic*], symbols, and rituals are among the elements of culture mentioned in the literature. This indicates that we are headed toward a "softer" set of factors than those of the past—ones that are at their heart mental and subjective, that are difficult to define operationally’ (Johnston & Klandermans, 1995: 3)

The time elapsed since this anticipatory statement has seen some bold attempts to better implement analysis with a stronger cultural inclination. These attempted to move away from a rationalistic, methodologically individualist framework, itself developed in response to the opposite extreme of often ungenerous methodologically collectivist accounts of crowd behaviour. Within a model that looked to the necessary mobilization of resources as its entry into analysis, movement studies were far more likely to investigate the likelihood of rational actors engaging with movements, without questioning that rationality, where it comes from, and how it is formed. It is my argument that, despite its own cultural turn (c.f. Brown, 2016; Yangzom, 2016), social movement theory has not made the necessary headway beyond this position or achieved the clarity to fulfil the potential of this cultural shift. Ullrich, Daphi and Baumgarten (2014) argue that there are a number of reasons for this, which largely stem from a preoccupation with older frameworks for understanding movements. First, there is a

general focus on only 'certain dimensions of culture'; second, the conceptualisation of culture is often very narrowly defined; and third, there is often, as may be obvious from the quote of Johnston and Klandermans above, a dichotomy drawn up between the cultural and the structural (Ullrich et al., 2014: 3).

Theories such as frame alignment, for example, discuss the strategic mobilization of certain packages of meaning over others, but, in doing so, treat culture and meaning as a resource in a manner too similar to older notions of resource mobilization. This form of analysis often misses the embeddedness of frames within wider, not to mention historical, socio-cultural processes, thus only providing a narrow and particular account of culture. In this way, it also overlooks the power invested within those relations: though lip service is given at times to what Stuart Hall (1982) describes as the 'politics of signification' (Benford & Snow, 2000: 613), there is too little recognition of what enables the availability of frames[2]. Elsewhere, the notion of the new social movement became the focal point of analysis. Far more conducive to studies of culture, new social movement theory can be considered an umbrella term for a broad theoretical field, in certain ways fundamentally linked to shifts in postmodernist thought, though largely in its substantive form. Its theorists argued beyond older labour movements, and toward expressivist, identity-based and lifestyle protests. Often treated as part of an emerging information-based society, conflict over power necessarily shifts toward cultural contestation, opened up by the proliferation of movements around all sorts of new demands. While the historicising of movements potentially offered here, and the view of culture as contested, certainly do more to ground movement claims than framing, the neglect of empirical evidence is often taken as a fundamental issue with new social movement theory, as too is the contention that these processes are indeed anything 'new'. Also the shift toward a radical identity politics, often involves a notion of culture that can be understood narrowly as a form of 'high' or privileged culture, neglecting other avenues of cultural discussion. More than anything, however, new social movement theorising is hindered by its new-found lack of materiality. Culture, in most new social movement theorising, is too devoid of any material determination. The cultural-structural binary or split therefore becomes a problem once more in social movement analysis.

There are other theories of culture within social movements, such as cognitive approaches, emotion/affect approaches (c.f. Flam & King, 2007; Goodwin & Jasper, 2006; Eyerman &

[2]Indeed, Erving Goffman, who formulated the idea of the frame in response to other tendencies within social theory, may never have asked this much of the concept in the first place (c.f. Denzin, 2004)

Jamison, 1991), but these tend to emphasise culture at the individual level (Ullrich et al., 2014). Furthermore, the framing and new social movement approaches have brought about the biggest shift in research practice, making them more worthy for critique, particularly as other theories are often placed in *relation* to them. Of course, the early critiques laid out here are not meant to overlook the gains made by these theories, and much useful and interesting work has been produced within them. As with any field, the varied analyses and investigations each have their own drawbacks and successes. Both, for example, foreground the cultural and provide license for further analysis in the area. However, they leave the cultural dimension in social movements either too abstract or ideational, with new social movement theory, or too static and voluntarist, as with frame alignment. Terminologically too, particularly within frame analysis, 'culture' is often narrowly employed as something to be drawn upon at certain times, or when the opportunity arises. More recent attempts have looked to move away from this, and to treat culture as inseparable from other aspects, recognising, for example, that 'structures are cultural (though not only cultural)' (Polletta, 2004: 97), and that 'organizations, associations, institutions, and how they perceive and define their interests are important but they are always accomplished through the vehicles of cultural creation' (Johnston, 2016: 415). In this way, culture is not simply 'discrete, measurable items, such as beliefs or rituals', but is a 'filter through which all action occurs' (Jasper, 2008: xi). These claims, as to the level of priority culture is afforded and the way in which it is conceptualised, provide a suitable refutation of the symbolically 'overflowing theses' of post-structuralism and post-modernism. To build upon these more recent suggestions, this thesis will rely on a broader conception of culture, developed out of the historical materialist tradition.

1.3 Theoretical and Empirical Contribution

The theoretical framework developed here culminates to some degree in Raymond Williams' cultural materialism, but does so through a certain trajectory of eclectic debates largely around the work of Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci, and the interdisciplinary field of Cultural Studies. On the basis of historical materialism, such a model is deeply historical, and culture is regarded as a continuously contested field of struggle, where different groups actively make claims within and against the hegemonic system of understanding, using only that which they have inherited. Such a conception provides a valuable historical adjustment to the heuristic device, already present within social movement theory, of the 'repertoire of contention' (Tilly, 1977) – the 'specific context of action forms' (Szabo, 1996: 1169), which, in light of Williams' arguments, becomes both determined *and* determining. Williams' rejection

of Marx's base and superstructure metaphor, and the emphasis given to it by orthodox Marxism, means that culture, generally, is seen as determined but also determining, as both a common inheritance and an active or creative manipulation of that common inheritance in practice. In this way it can overcome the inert voluntarism of framing and take into account how frames are made, in terms of raw material and the creative process itself. The theory's 'absolute historicism' also emphasises notions of power within this creative process, as over time certain creative manipulations lead to particular dominant ways of thinking, derived from a complex interplay of traces within the common inheritance. With empirical data, it can also say something more about the forging of collective identity, so prominent though often rather abstract within new social movement theories. Such a viewpoint also foregrounds an understanding of conditioned agency, where from the common inheritance, and its internalisation through experience, there emerges a range of possibilities. This is very much removed from the arguments of unlimited creativity implied in some post-structuralist and postmodern arguments, and a necessary line is thus negotiated between reductionism and radical pluralism through an understanding that all cultural creativity or articulation occurs in real, material conditions, with real social relations, that are produced and reproduced over time.

In order to substantiate this theoretical framework, outlined in far greater detail in Chapter Three, I will look to apply it to a particular cultural artefact. Indeed, recent social movement theory has posited that the study of artefacts of culture is increasingly important in order to understand their role within and upon protest. Johnston (2016: 423), for example, states that such items have a 'focal role' in conveying something important about the 'ideational', 'structural' and 'performative'[3] dimensions of social movements. Moreover, Johnston and Klandermans (1995: 17) explain that '…for cultural analysis to be convincing to others it must take as its primary datum some cultural artefact [*sic*] or set of cultural products, either ideational or material, and relate it to changes in collective action'. This is compatible with cultural theory that treats *the use* of an artefact as a practice, involving the agency of individuals within an ever-changing set of determinate conditions. This thesis takes as its artefact the Guy Fawkes mask. The emergence over the last decade of the Guy Fawkes mask within protest has led to various social movement scholars commenting on its role as a practice in movements (Call, 2008; Fuchs, 2013; Gledhill, 2012; Harbisher 2016; Juris, 2012; Kohns, 2013; Ruiz, 2013). Commensurate with my intentions here, the mask is referred to as

[3]These categories are largely drawn from Tilly's (1978) analysis of movement analytical dimensions, though Johnston adds the 'artefactual'.

a ‘systematic reference to popular culture’ (Stoehrel & Lindren, 2014: 239) and a ‘complex artefact of remix culture’ (Meikle, 2016: 66) and has been variously identified as a ‘potent free floating symbol’ (Call, 2008: 155), a ‘symbolically charged… trademark of contemporary protest movements’ (Kohns, 2013: 90), a ‘rallying cry for social justice’ (Phillips, 2015: 150), an ‘iconic emblem of international antiausterity’ (Ruiz, 2013: 273), a ‘generic protest accessory’ (Gledhill, 2012: 346), and an ‘image of resistance’ (Juris, 2012: 261). The mask registers as a flexible, yet common place, aesthetic element of contemporary protest. In choosing such an artefact, or *practice*, I hope to further social movement analysis both empirically, through an investigation into what is clearly a remarkable development within protest, and theoretically, using the historical framework to better place and contextualise this development.

1.4 Empirical Base: The Guy Fawkes Mask in Cultural Terms

This project will therefore look to investigate and understand the practice of employing the Guy Fawkes mask, building an analytical picture to better comprehend why it seems to have become readily available for protesters to adopt. In my own time as a protester in and around the London area, for roughly six or seven years and in relation to a wide variety of interrelated movements, the mask seems to have become part of the fabric of protest. Developing over time, each event would have at least a small group of masked protesters, until certain events – like the Million Mask March – would be organised with the mask firmly in mind (Harbisher, 2016). As above, numerous articles have seized on similar observations to varying degrees and have made powerful statements as to the mask’s ability to formulate a coherent and transformative group identity (Gerbaudo & Trere, 2015; McDonald, 2015), to challenge global ideologies through this perceived unity (Goode, 2015; Ruiz, 2013), to direct attention strategically (Fuchs, 2013) and with anonymity assured (Nail, 2013), but to remain elastic and cover all number of aims and ambitions (Call, 2008). Perhaps for these reasons, the mask seems to have dramatically increased in popularity over time, as is evidenced in this quote from Meikle:

> ‘By 2011, the year of global protests from the Arab Spring to Occupy Wall Street, the Guy Fawkes mask could be seen everywhere, showing up in crowds from New York to Athens, from Egypt to Thailand. It was even worn by a group of politicians in the Polish Parliament. Since 2012, 5 November each year has seen coordinated global events called the Million Mask March in hundreds of cities’ (Meikle, 2016: 66-67)

The mask is, at the very least, then, an important addition to what might be understood as the present day protest repertoire. Furthermore, its apparent diversity, being used across different cultures and geographical areas (Cambre, 2014; Deibert, 2014; Ruiz, 2013), foreground it as a valuable case study for the cultural analysis of social movements. The mask's employment and development through use by the online hacktivist group, Anonymous (Coleman, 2014), and given the hotly debated role of the internet, e-movements and e-communities (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Bennett, Segerberg & Walker, 2014; Dolata & Schrape, 2016), further highlights its relevance to contemporary social movements. Finally, the mask's relation to other examples of popular culture, such as the infamous Gunpowder Plot, the comic-book and later film adaptation, *V for Vendetta*, and its place within the dystopian form, intensify its cultural connectivity (Keller, 2008), providing more depth in cultural analysis.

This project first undertook a protest event analysis of the Guy Fawkes mask in order to establish more precisely its usage and distribution in protests over time and space. The results of this can be found in Chapter Five. The purpose of such an analysis is summed up in the first research question asked within this project: *to what extent has the practice of adopting the Guy Fawkes mask become part of the social movement and protest 'repertoire'?* Through answering this question it becomes clear that the mask is well established as part of the social movement repertoire, leading to further questions regarding its ability to sit comfortably within such diverse cultures and far-reaching geographical locations. The generalities thus implied by the broader analytical scope of the protest event analysis demonstrate the importance of a more specific and particular analytical focus. The protest event analysis offered up the Occupy London social movement as a central point in the career of the mask and enabled me to offer the following, more specific, research question: *within a particular protest event – Occupy London – what can be understood as the conditions for such a practice?* I used interviews with twenty Occupy London protesters to answer this question. In my analysis and reporting of the data generated from the methods employed here, and in order to effectively combine the empirical with the theoretical, my final research question asks how the data obtained, and the practice of wearing the mask, might be understood with the culturally-inclined theoretical framework of Chapter Three, specifically around ideas of 'hegemony' and the power invested in human activity and the potential of its resonance with others. A full outline of these procedures can be found in Chapter Four.

In addressing these research questions, the thesis demonstrates that the mask is firmly established across a wide range of movements, across the world, and that extant social movement theory is inadequate for understanding this availability. It argues that current cultural theories within social movement scholarship are limited, in part by their relationship to previous theoretical inclinations, and that an approach encompassing actively structured, historical and power-imbued dimensions is necessary. It therefore posits that a historical materialist approach to culture, in its capacity to understand why certain practices become available through previous human practice, is a useful avenue for analysis, as it allows an understanding of the Guy Fawkes mask and other cultural artefacts as determined *and* determining, inherited *and* creative. After demonstrating the extent of the mask's use (in Chapter Five), the thesis shows (in Chapter Six) how the Guy Fawkes mask relies on certain cultural traces – where the cultural is deeply intertwined with the material and social relations in which it is forged – to become available. Furthermore, (in Chapter Seven) it demonstrates how these traces and their articulation are contested over, in relation to what resonates with the experiences of particular groups. In doing so, this thesis provides a picture of the mask as a cultural practice that is belaboured, contested and always contextually grounded, beyond the ideas of framing, new social movements and even some postmodern understandings of such objects.

1.5 Overview of Chapters

1.5.1 Chapter Two: Culture in Social Movement Theory

Chapter Two builds on the ideas already laid out here with regard to social movement theory. After a brief discussion of social movement theory before the 'cultural turn', the chapter provides an overview of frame analysis and new social movement theory. It argues that, despite an emphasis on *the cultural,* where the former treats culture in an overly voluntarist, instrumental way, with power referred to in only situational dynamics rather than any link to wider cultural processes, the latter struggles with the materiality of culture, going too far in its claims to be 'new'. Chapter Two offers various avenues of thought in and around these theories – including an interrogation of the work of those not necessarily *within* these perspectives but affected by their developments and that respond constructively – for a sustained reflection on their achievements and their inadequacies, drawing in particular on the need to appropriately anchor theorising in relation to wider social and material processes. In doing so, and by ending with a brief discussion of historical

materialism, the chapter clears the way for a more nuanced, processual, and power-laden understanding of culture in Chapter Three.

1.5.2 Chapter Three: Historical Materialism, Culture, and Social Movements

This chapter develops an understanding of cultural activity based on the historical materialism of Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, and the cultural materialism of Raymond Williams. The particular configuration of theory is largely dependent on that which connects these theorists, and I discuss various other important authors – such as Stuart Hall, EP Thompson, and Valentin Volosinov – to forge a specific analytical standpoint. To surpass current social movement theory's attempts at understanding culture, the emphasis is on a view of culture that is both a collective or common inheritance in dialectic relationship with a view of culture as creative practice. To account for antagonisms between conflicting groups, this cultural practice, constituted of and further constituting social and material relations, is understood as fiercely contested in line with dominant, emergent and residual understandings. Such a conceptualisation is meticulously outlined in Chapter Three. Within Chapter Three I also engage with important debates around Louis Althusser as well as those that profess to be *post-Marxist*, such as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, or *post-hegemonic*, such as Richard Day. Anticipating critique from these quarters is necessary in order to reinforce the theoretical model's integrity within social movement analysis. Chapters Two and Three combined make up the general theoretical basis for the remainder of the project. The ideas from these, particularly Chapter Three, resurface throughout and reinforce and further the empirical contribution in later chapters.

1.5.3 Chapter Four: Research Design and Methodology

In order to better demonstrate the efficacy of the theory detailed in Chapter Three, beyond that of Chapter Two, this chapter outlines an appropriate empirical study with various stages of data collection and analysis. The chapter first of all discusses, in greater detail than in this introduction, the Guy Fawkes mask, building a rationale for its inclusion. Following this, and in relevant order, a blueprint for each research stage – a protest event analysis and semi-structured interviews – is provided, justifying techniques and procedures, including those pertaining to data collection, data handling, and transcription, in accordance with the research questions outlined above. The interview sample – Occupy London – emerged from the protest event analysis as central for the mask's career, and the rationale for its inclusion is therefore discussed after the outline of that method. The final section of Chapter Four

deals with the relevant ethical considerations for this project.

1.5.4 Chapter Five: Protest Event Analysis

Pertaining to the first research question, and through both qualitative and quantitative dimensions of the protest event analysis data, this chapter provides a comprehensive discussion of the mask's widespread employment. With the data allowing for chronological reporting, it points out the 'peaks and troughs' of the Guy Fawkes mask's use in relation to key events, movements, and phenomena elsewhere at the time. It also looks to the content of the news reports to observe the tone and the articulatory attempts of those reporting on observations of the mask, as well as of those being interviewed about its role in relation to their protest activity. The final sections draw out some of the complexities in dealing with the mask in protest with small case studies where the mask becomes a point of contestation on both sides of particular struggles. From the data, clear points of interest emerge, including those related to Anonymous, Occupy, and the Million Mask March, and from these the rationale for the specific interview sample will be explained and elaborated upon.

1.5.5 Chapter Six: Historical Determinants of a Cultural Artefact

With the popularity of the mask effectively demonstrated, this chapter, using the cultural theory described in Chapter Three and the interview data obtained, investigates the historical basis for the mask's availability within Occupy London. That is, it explores the reasons given for such a practice. In so doing, it answers the second research question, demonstrating the complexity of the mask's place within the protest repertoire, while also partially answering the third indirectly, as this complexity emerges as contestation over particular needs and expectations. The reasons that arose in analysis are the importance of collective anonymity, the pressing concern of surveillance, and the importance of mediation and the creation of spectacle. Each of these is treated as embedded within a conditioned and conditioning cultural and material set of relations, most prominently located by interviewees within a wider neoliberal – or perhaps more accurately neo-conservative[4] – context.

1.5.6 Chapter Seven: The Mask, Resonation, and Counter-Hegemony

Where Chapter Six looked to the reasons for wearing the mask, as part of the wider social context, Chapter Seven investigates in greater depth how the Occupy London respondents

[4]Respondents spoke of neo-liberalism – which admittedly has many definitions – but spoke also of negative and class-based state intervention, a characteristic more attributable to forms of neo-conservatism (Vaisee, 2010).

understood the mask in relation to the aims of the movement and their ambitions more generally. Answering the third research question, and using more explicitly the cultural theory of Chapter Three, this chapter demonstrates an even greater complexity when it comes to adopting the mask, manifesting in struggles within the internal dynamics of the movement. Framed in the language of hegemony, and discussing the importance of resonating with the experience of potential recruits, Chapter Seven brings to the fore some important questions for the success of social movements more generally, as the majority of respondents were concerned about the level of accountability of a movement or group when partaking in a practice deemed as unrealistic, untrustworthy, based in fantasy, and more likely to bring about disinhibited behaviour.

1.5.7 Chapter Eight: Discussion and Conclusion

Chapter Eight demonstrates the overall contributions of the project, bringing together both the theoretical and empirical dimensions into one general conclusion. Key points are drawn upon – such as where social movement theory can be surpassed by historical materialism and how this is evidenced in the case of the Guy Fawkes mask – and enable a discussion of the implications of this project.

1.6 Summary

In summary, this project moves beyond the inadequacies of current social movement theory by introducing a historical materialist approach to culture, therefore contributing to the cultural turn within social movement theory and wider social science. In doing so, it shows that the analysis of social movements can account for the deeply historical, power-imbued, though still agentive, role of culture. The following chapters do this through a critical analysis of social movement theory as it currently stands, an account of the particular historical materialist approach adopted here, and by an empirical analysis of a specific and popular cultural artefact – the Guy Fawkes mask – so prevalent within present-day movements. Where the earlier chapters (Chapters Two and Three) focus on theoretical arguments, the later chapters (Five, Six, and Seven) look to reinforce and embed this with a full empirical analysis. Progressing through the latter, the substantive chapters, the analysis will demonstrate the necessary complexity of understanding culture, as well as how this complexity is best comprehended using the historical materialist approach previously foregrounded.

Chapter Two. Culture in Social Movement Theory

The comprehension of culture and processes of meaning-making within studies of social movements has developed over the past forty years. Large shifts in onus, for example from structural paradigms to ones that accommodate culture, have occurred, according to Tarrow (1992: 174), on the basis of a profound 'dissatisfaction with how the dominant paradigms' of old 'dealt with the construction of meaning'. Tarrow goes on to grapple with an important question for any form of social analysis, regarding movements or otherwise; namely whether or not meaning and all subsequent action is linked to or, at the extreme level, *an expression of* other factors, such as material needs, economic interest or political power. This is indicative of a profound shift in social analysis, and a slower shift in social movement theory, summed up by the notion of the 'cultural turn', where the social comes to be understood as constituted by the subjective and the discursive, rather than the organization of some superstructural reflection of infrastructural facts and tendencies (Kuper, 1999; Nash, 2001; Ray & Sayer, 1999). Simply put, social analysis sought to elevate the cultural away from a position of dependence upon the non-cultural. The direction derived from this within social movement theory has certainly encouraged a more comprehensive analytical agenda, with new social movement theorising and frame analyses moving beyond or supplementing already-existing forms of investigation, but with a renewed emphasis on culture. My argument here, however, is that these are largely inadequate for a full understanding of culture within social movements. This chapter provides a critical description of these projects, highlighting both their benefits and inadequacies. In detailing where they perhaps could go further, and also where they are incapable of doing so, the task of this chapter is to clear the way for a deeper conceptual exposition around culture in Chapter Three.

2.1 Before the 'Cultural Turn'

Though this thesis rests upon the inadequacy of social movement theory since the 'cultural turn', attempts to incorporate culture into the field predate such a moment. Blumer's (1967) symbolic interactionist account of collective behaviour, for example, rests on assumptions about culture and cultural change, where the norms that mediate interaction break down due to some form of 'social unrest'. Blumer discusses various forms of response to this, usually beginning with generative 'elementary behaviour' that enables the (re)constitution of a shared collective understanding (Crossley, 2002a). From here, various forms of social movement emerge to apply pressure for change in a direction aligned with the new and

stable set of group norms. From a Parsonian structural functionalist perspective, Smelser (1962) also gives an account of collective behaviour that relies upon a triggering factor, what he describes as 'structural strain'. From here a series of other components – such as 'structural conduciveness', 'generalized belief', 'precipitating factors', 'mobilization of participants for action' and 'operation of social control' – determine the form taken by collective behaviour, some of which can be loosely considered as cultural determinants (Smelser, 1962: 15-17). Indeed, Smelser's model argues that how we act is based on organisational standards that develop from norms, which themselves are derived from values. These accounts provide a strong *impression* of culture, but the former provides no real context from which it emerges or within which it works, therefore demonstrating an overly voluntarist model, and the latter is overly structural, struggling to account for the role of the actor.

A full swing of the pendulum from the extreme of this methodological collectivism to the opposite extreme of methodological individualism – prioritising the individual's self-interest and microeconomic understandings of the human as a calculating and cost-weighing information processer (Ferree, 1992) – was the response to collective behaviour within social movement theory. Rational action models of calculation, in numerous forms, therefore became the frontier of movement analysis (Olson, 1965). Such analyses fail to comprehend culture beyond its provision of 'a distribution of resources and a set of legal constraints and opportunities within which to manoeuvre' (Jasper, 2008: 24). These led eventually to other social movement models that came to dominate the theoretical scene, namely resource mobilization and political process theory, where 'the analyst could examine movement and countermovements as engaged in a rational game to achieve specific interests' (Johnston, Larana & Gusfield, 1994: 5). However, in tailoring these concepts around individualism and rigid notions of rational choice, proponents of these theories were left vulnerable to criticisms regarding the incomprehension of culture (Kurzman, 2008) and conceptual overextension (Goodwin & Jasper, 2004). Though resource mobilization scholars might refute this claim, explaining that culture could just as much be treated as a resource (Edward & McCarthy, 2004), the idea of an entirely rational individual, with rationality considered the inversion of emotion, had little scope for understanding the cultural processes involved in the interpretation of meaning (Ferree & Miller, 1985; Jasper, 2010).

According to Jasper (2010: 29), culture involves practices that are 'too open-ended' for easy prediction, 'intrinsic pleasures too varied to allow us to specify correct moves' and he therefore suggests that a move away from a 'rationalist-irrationalist' dichotomy, prevalent

within rational actor models, is important. These deficiencies have led to new perspectives more closely aligned with movements in the social sciences more broadly, toward post-structural and discursive analyses. According to Davis (2002: 6), these 'directly challenge resource mobilization's rationalist, individualist, and instrumental/political assumption, as well as its overemphasis on formal organizations and deemphasis of ideational factors'. While discussing grievance and mobilization, Snow, Rochford, Worden, and Benford (1986: 465) claim that the rationalist theories 'neglect the process of grievance interpretation; they suggest a static view of participation; and they tend to over-generalize participation-related processes'. Snow et al.'s (1986) argument prefigures their development of the framing approach to culture, initially popular in the United States for its social constructionism (Buechler, 2016), and perhaps the most influential within social movement theory (Della Porta & Diani, 2006). Despite the apparent 'break', however, framing has been largely utilised as a supplementary form of investigation, to support resource mobilization and political process theories through their cultural inadequacies.

2.2 Frame Analysis

The social movement theory of frame analysis relies heavily upon American models based in pragmatism, symbolic interaction and dramaturgy (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1959). Using the work of Goffman (1959, 1974), Snow and Benford (1988) apply to social movements the notion of 'living by inference' (Goffman, 1959: 14), where a frame can be defined as an 'interpretive schema that simplifies and condenses the 'world out there' by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of action' (Snow & Benford, 1988: 137). These 'collective action frames… come to function as schematic maps that guide and constrain the mobilising activities of other movements and actors' within a particular cycle of protest (Melo, 2016: 405). This 'punctuating and encoding' appears to be from a loosely applied and rarely discussed wider culture, presumably made up of 'shared beliefs and understandings, mediated by and constituted by symbols and language' (Zald, 1996: 262). The best of the framing literature alludes to elements drawn upon from a master frame or larger cultural system, but with little detail of the nuances in this process (Babb, 1996; Gamson, 1998; Johnston & Klandermans, 1995). Nonetheless, this transposition from 'everyday life' into the specific field of social movements yielded decades of research employing concepts pertaining to frames (Benford & Snow, 2000; Snow, Benford, McCammon, Hewitt & Fitzgerald, 2014).

Returning to a position closer to that of collective behaviour theorists[1], and according to Benford and Snow (2000: 612), framing attempts to understand 'the generation, diffusion, and functionality of mobilizing and countermobilizing ideas and meanings' on the basis that this is what the then-dominant resource mobilization perspective missed: *the mobilization of meaning.*

The social movement is understood as a site of 'signification', a place where meaning can be framed (Ryan & Gamson, 2006): where those within a social movement 'frame, or assign meaning to and interpret, relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists' (Snow & Benford, 1988: 198). The subject matter here is profoundly intersubjective, interactional, and deals, above all, with the negotiation of shared meaning (Gamson, 1992). This is clear in McVeigh, Myers and Sikkink's (2004: 656) explication of the numerous stages within framing: diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational. These entail the representation of 'existing social relations in a way that convinces potential recruits', respectively, that social change is 'desirable', that it is plausible, and that it is 'their participation' that is required to accomplish it (McVeigh et al. 2004: 656-657). Framing's vast employment has brought about a language that can be used to analyse more specifically the cultural dynamics of a social movement. The notion of frame resonance, for example, may be effective here in drawing out the complexity and contestation of meaning making, as some will 'fall on deaf ears', others even becoming counterproductive (Snow & Benford, 1988: 198). The 'mobilising potency' of these frames is dependent upon 1) their 'robustness, completeness, and thoroughness of the framing effort', 2) the 'internal structure of the larger belief system', 3) in a phenomenological sense, the relevance of the frame 'to the lifeworld' of the participant, and 4) their relevance to 'cycles of protest' (Snow & Benford, 1988: 199).

Two examples within the vast framing literature illuminate the processes by which they work. Marullo, Pagnucco and Smith (1996) look at the use of frames within the US Peace Movement in 1988 and 1992, in relation to dramatic changes in the global order. The authors evidence a shift from nuclear-orientated bilateralism to multilateralism and broader environment and global interdependence claims in the framing of 'committed activists', thus demonstrating the use of narrowly defined frames during 'movement surges' and broader 'retention' frames, incorporating elements from other movements, during 'movement

[1]Closer, that is, in its intersubjective and interactional tendencies.

abeyance processes' (Marullo et al., 1996: 22). Zuo and Benford (1995) investigate the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement and, as with Marullo et al. (1996), rely upon numerous modes of analysis, with framing as cultural supplement. After looking into grievances, Zuo and Benford argue that the informal networks of having ten universities in one Beijing district enabled the necessary support and resourcing of the generally resource-poor movement. They also discuss important changes in the political opportunity structure, with a more relaxed ideological field in the People's Republic of China, after the death of Chairman Mao, and the 'open-door' policy, allowing more exposure to the Western world. Finally, they argue that framing processes were successful[2] because of their drawing ideas from Chinese traditions, such as Confucianism, communism and nationalism. Observable in both of these examples is a continued reliance upon network, political process and resource mobilisation perspectives and the importance of *narrative fidelity*, or the empirical credibility of frames. This emphasis on resonance, or 'experiential commensurability', has received considerable attention within the social movement literature (c.f. McAdam, 1994; Tarrow, 1994), but remains a source of confusion and critique to some. Ferree (2003: 305) for example suggests that resonance is too often treated as the same as success in frame analysis, thus reducing it to a mere 'marketing process'. Oliver and Johnston (2000) locate this confusion within the tendency to treat frames and ideology – two concepts we could certainly argue are related – as synonymous.

This equivalence of the frame and ideology, they argue, is erroneous, as, 'very roughly, frame points to process, while ideology points to content' (2000: 9). Oliver and Johnston (2005: 9) continue that 'frame points to similar processes that not only occur in social movements, but in everyday interaction, to processes that transcend content. Ideology points to the specifics of content, and to the processes whereby that specific system of meaning has [*sic*] constructed'. From this position, 'substituting the term frame wherever ideology would have been used leads to muddled frame theory and diverts attention from a serious examination of ideology on its own terms' (Oliver & Johnston, 2000: 10). It becomes apparent, then, that a serious problem with framing, as the confusion around resonance demonstrates, is within its conceptualisation of power: how power impacts upon that which resonates and what is incommensurate with the 'lifeworld' of potential movement recruits (Ellingson, 1995). Like many Meadian (1934) ideas within symbolic interaction and dramaturgical models, power is implicit within framing, inherent within the construction of expectations, the accepted 'generalised other' or 'definition of the situation'. Accordingly,

[2]Successful, that is, in gaining support, despite the June 4th massacre at Tiananmen Square.

then, Benford and Hunt (1992: 37-38) discuss the questions to be asked of power – who has it, who doesn't, and who has the power to reproduce the definition of the situation. However, they then simply disregard their line of questioning due to a 'lack of scholarly consensus'[3]. Their view is one based on social movements as 'dramas in which protagonists and antagonists compete to affect audiences' interpretations of power relations' (Benford & Hunt, 1992: 37). In place of an adequate answer to these questions of power, the rest of Benford and Hunt's article is spent merely describing how and in what ways power is communicated, in its explicit and rhetorical form.

While focusing on group dynamics should not be considered wrong – absolutely, this communication and apparent exposure of power occurs – it is overly simplistic and defines narrow and all-too-rigid parameters on analysis. In effect, it only interrogates one form of power. As Ferree (2003: 339) claims, 'analysis of framing in general and of resonance in particular needs to be more explicitly connected with the analysis of power relations'. Given the vast diversity of frames available (Gamson, 1992, 1998), there must be a deeper cultural understanding, with its own history of power relations, which provides any stability and consistency in frame construction and adoption (Van Gorp, 2007). Despite this, framing appears to give no comprehensive sense, besides being told by some that they in some way link to wider political understandings (c.f. Benford & Hunt, 1992), of 'how frames get made' (Hart, 1996: 95). There is ambiguity as to what systems these frames infer, and only silence regarding how such a process of inference might work. Perhaps with a greater emphasis on contextual power – 'a little more structuralism and less voluntarism' (Hart, 1996: 93) – through the notion of pre-existing cultural codes, we can better understand the origins of such frames and how they relate to ideology, but as it stands framing is 'quite vague in terms of its constituent elements and general processes' (Zald, 1996: 261). In short, Benford and Hunt (1992) are right to say that frames expose and communicate power, but they overlook how the range of framing potentialities, what can be thought, said and practiced in any given moment, is steeped in a deeper, conditioning power. From this, we can argue that 'agency and innovation do not come from lack of structure; rather they happen when people make skilled use of possibilities in existing structures – cultural and social – taking advantage of their multiplicity, tensions, multi-vocality, and so on' (Hart, 1996: 94). An

[3]Benford and Hunt (1992: 39) do refer to 'scripts' that are 'built upon 'frames' and that encompass 'all of the various framing activities and alignment strategies'. These, they argue 'are about power relations. They include ideas, attributions, norms, values, beliefs and a universe of discourse'. However, their discussion is brief and very vague.

emphasis, then, needs to be placed on the meaning-making process, on fram*ing*, as opposed to frames (Vliegenthart & van Zoonen, 2011).

This difficulty with framing *as is* can be seen as indicative of the historical polemic between the macro/structural and the micro/agentic within social movement theory (c.f. Eyerman & Jamison, 1991: 45), and the attempt to simply attach a social-psychological theory (the former) to resource mobilization and political opportunity structure (the latter) – to form the political process model (Edwards, 2014) – without thinking in enough detail about the epistemological issues between them. Such practice may well lead to what Gamson (1992: 70) describes as an 'epistemological chasm'. This is well documented by Gillan (2008: 251), who speaks of the apparent 'cognitive shortcut' offered by interpretive frames to the individual 'to order their perceptions of the world' and the epistemological difficulty of such movement between the individual and the collective levels. Indeed, as Steinberg (1999: 209) points out, frames are often 'depicted as discrete, internally cohesive packages of meaning readily passed between actors' and 'challengers' shared understandings of the conflict can be too readily assumed, rather than perceived as an ongoing and problematic achievement'. This is based upon an implicit 'representation-responsive understanding of meaning production', most likely drawn from resource mobilization and rational choice models, which leads to meanings and understandings that are 'largely self-evident and unchanging' (Steinberg, 1999: 209).

Helpfully, Benford (1997: 412) explains that this may originate in the inadequacy of the initial task described by Goffman: in any given moment or situation understanding 'what is it that's going on here?' He argues that we would perhaps be better off going back to William James (1950), whose work Goffman utilised, and questioning 'under what circumstances do we think things are real?' Following from this, according to Benford (1997: 412), we can additionally ascertain 'under what conditions do people believe in a particular version of reality' and 'in multiple versions of reality?' Without this concession we are left with what Goodman (1998, cited in Gamson, 1992: 70) calls a 'flabby relativism', where all frames may have equal claim, leaving no space for contestation or conflict over meaning. While the framing process has 'developed sensitivity to the cultural processes in social movements' (Gillan, 2008: 253), this polemic is freshly renewed with each attempt to unite them in this way (c.f. Williams, 1995). Of course, we might also argue that the source of these difficulties may be that macro-historical analyses and emphases were, in fact, never on the symbolic interactionist agenda (Denzin, 2004), given its basis as a response to grand theorising in one direction and individualising behaviourism in the other. The corollary of this is that such

accounts can only give a very limited sense of the dynamics of meaning mobilization within social movements and elsewhere. This concession, however, does not save those adopting these concepts for social movements from criticism. To rescue social movement theory from this potential relativism, scholars of social movements have looked to other concepts to complement or replace framing.

2.3 Anchoring Frames: 'Tool-Kits', Repertoires and Social Representations

In line with Hart's (1996: 88) emphasis on pre-existing codes, and the 'cultural structures in which they are embedded', we can look to culture as the meso-level link that unites, in an epistemologically sound way, 'the individual and the broad macro context' (Steinberg, 1998: 849). For this, as part of a potentially useful 'performative tradition' (Johnston, 1995), some social movement research has relied upon the metaphor, provided by Swidler (1986: 277), of the cultural 'tool-kit', which emphasises a set of resources available, or a 'repertoire', forged from 'pre-fabricated links', for active individuals to draw upon at any given time (c.f. Williams, 1995, 2004). These repertoires are thus very similar to Tilly's (1995: 26) group-specific 'learned cultural creations': 'limited set[s] of routines that are learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choices'. With clear rational actor theory, resource mobilization and political opportunity structure influence, Tilly (2008: 190) claims that what is available for collective action is potentially dependent on 'opportunities, threats, repression, facilitation, power, and… the relative costs and likely benefits of the array of choices actually confronting the group in question'. Repertoires, according to Traugott (1995: 2), allow a stress, 'without unnecessary teleological implications', on 'both the great continuity that collective action exhibits over many generations and the sweeping changes in the accepted form of protest that occur only at long intervals'. Within Swidler's appropriation, however, repertoires leave room for innovation, either gradually, at the edge of repertoires, or by sudden, impactive events (Tarrow, 1993a, 1995). The term also implies the continuous learning of those using repertoires and thus the continual development of the repertoires themselves (Tilly, 2008), along with a degree of agency in the selection of certain tactics over others.

This conception is far more open to power via the mere mention of historically afforded tendencies, or 'pre-fabricated links' (Swidler, 1986: 277): '…culture appears to shape action only in that the cultural repertoire limits the available range of strategies of action' (Swidler, 1986: 284). Williams (1995: 126), a proponent of this model, elaborates, explaining that 'the choice among strategies and the use of particular resources are not completely at the

discretion of movement actors. Choice is also shaped by availability within historically situated social contexts.' Cultural choices made, and acted upon, are not straightforwardly accepted, they are struggled over in a 'culturally contested arena' (Swidler, 1986). It seems we can therefore observe a historically-bound notion of the repertoires that brings us one step closer to a more comprehensive understanding of power and what it actually makes, and perceptibly makes, available for those wanting to take part in framing processes. That is, we can question why social actors define certain things as *legitimate* over others (Fine, 1995:127). However, in places, it can be argued that repertoires and toolkits remain overly voluntaristic in their conceptualisation and, in a similar fashion to the framing model, struggle to locate the underpinning power relations of why certain cultural resources – certain 'symbols, stories, rituals, and world-views' (Swidler, 1986: 273) – are particularly salient, or resonate particularly well, at any given time. As Kane (2007: 253) argues, it has 'no anchor for analysing meaning construction' and thus 'meaning is not derived from coherent structures of symbolic elements'. Indeed, while they may allow us to 'take a step back' and 'reflect upon' the 'social form' of protest activities, we are left asking what it is that 'shapes repertoire choice at ground level' (Crossley, 2002b: 50). It is possible to argue to a degree with Kane's further assertion that the system is merely static, given the hint in the direction of historical 'pre-fabricated links' by Swidler, but, again, the processes by which these work are not made entirely clear.

The anchoring that Kane suggests is missing here can be found elsewhere. Gillan (2008: 261), for example, attempts to relate the 'temporally specific demands and resonant slogans' of framing to 'wider ideational complexes', by developing the notion of a wider 'orientational frame' angled to 'mediate' *between* frames and ideologies. Such a frame consists of various beliefs pertaining to 'political processes', 'moral values', 'visions for long-term change', 'the agency of the individual or the group', and 'the relationship of other social actors to different sets of ideas' (Gillan, 2008: 254). Appropriate for purposes of anchoring, Gillan also foregrounds the role of hermeneutical interpretation in building up, over time, a picture of the whole in relation to each encountered part (different ideational elements), which 'halts the slide into the meaninglessness of absolute relativism' (2008: 259). Others suggest a more social-psychological understanding, with emphasis on *origins* of meaning. Moscovici (1988, 1993, 2000), for example, discusses 'social representations', which consist of systems of 'values, ideas and practices with a two-fold function; first to establish an order which will enable individuals to orient themselves… and, second, to

facilitate communication among members of a community' (Sotirakopoulou & Breakwell, 1992: 29).

Social representations 'conventionalize objects, persons, and events we encounter', according to Moscovici (2000: 22), as, not too dissimilar from the hermeneutic circle advocated by Gillan (2008), 'each experience is added to a reality predetermined by conventions'. There is thus a clearer sense of anchoring here, which is all the stronger in its utilisation by Villas Boas (2010: 380), who argues for the necessary historicisation of social representations, treating them as ''psycho-historical' phenomena, dispelling the impression that they are presented either as an 'organized corpus' waiting for the use of a suitable methodological tool to be unveiled… or as the product of a type of 'universal abstract', established within an unhistorical context'. Despite these developments, which provide an admirable attempt to access the workings of culture in social movements, the notion of 'social representation' remains incapable of comprehending with any real rigour the wider historical dynamics of how that culture became legitimate, and thus how this legitimation is worked upon and reworked, with an eye to the necessary power relations, to construct frames in a strategic way. Indeed, the power-engrained comprehension that those strategic activists, or 'framers', attempt to amplify is surely already embedded within an understanding that has historical links with others processes and power relations: something that framing and the perhaps overextended notion of repertoires often miss.

One particular avenue for social movement theory has been taken by Steinberg (1995, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2002) who, in relying on the ideas of Bakhtin, provides precisely this critique of framing and other largely North American social constructionist tendencies. Steinberg (1995: 59) treats the frame 'as composed of a repertoire of discourse' which is 'not only limited but limiting'. In this sense, repertoires 'bound the set of meanings through which challengers can articulate claims and ideologically mediate the decision to act instrumentally. By mediating between consciousness and action, discourse shapes conceptions of just claims and their legitimate pursuit and the targets for their redress' (Steinberg, 1995: 60). With the argument that the 'repertoire of discourse' is 'created and articulated through contention', and thus as 'an ongoing dialogue between powerholders and challengers' (Steinberg, 1995: 59-60), and with a focus on 'the discourse through which people can make claims, articulate senses of justice, and express their identities' (Steinberg, 1999: 208), a relational social movement theory is made possible. As Steinberg (1999: 208) argues, 'rather than analysing the culture of contention as divided between discrete dominant and dissident spheres we need to analyse how both are partly products of the

other'. Steinberg does this by connecting a materialist sense of discourse, as opposed to the post-materialist or post-structuralist sense used by others (c.f. Cloud, 1994; Taylor & Whittier, 1995), with a theory of hegemony, thereby speaking to the historically-located dominant group's capacity to 'limit dialogue and its clash of meanings in their interactions with subordinates' (Steinberg, 1996: 6). This is certainly a fruitful development due to the limiting, and thus anchoring, of meaning through the material and non-material context. There are clear similarities here with certain cultural explorations of Marx's historical materialism – the subject of the next chapter and the theoretical contribution in this project. Steinberg's work, in his discussions around collective identity, also provides a link to another theoretical position, one that is partially based on overcoming the ideas of Marx in social movement theory, which takes the form of theories around the supposedly *new* social movements. These arise out of the European context, as opposed to the North American, where theorists remained preoccupied with notions of class opposition, and less rooted in the rationalist-irrationalist arguments of resource mobilization (Jasper, 2010).

2.4 New Social Movements

Sharing with some variants of postmodernism the idea of an epochal break, or a substantive shift (du Gay, 1997; Nash, 2001), what would come to be described as new social movements were those no longer based on a binary model of industrial relations, where movements were directly against the exploitative basis of capital accumulation. They are instead related to a proliferation of oppositional groups, due to 'the changing requirements of capital accumulation in the postmodern age', pertaining largely to 'the advent of a service/technical economy with its emphasis on growth and information management' (Pichardo, 1997: 419-420). As Steinmetz argues:

> '[t]he new social movements have been paradoxical for traditional Marxism. Most importantly, Marxist categories of social class have not been able to map the frontiers of social conflict nor the social composition of the movements' support groups or membership. Nor have the movements' goals been framed in terms of benefits for specific social classes. Although these movements have vigorously opposed many of the same forces of power, property, and privilege as the old labor [*sic*] and social movements, the form of their opposition has differed in almost every respect' (Steinmetz, 1994: 177)

New social movement theorists, then, 'whether they referred to welfare capitalism, postindustrialism, the programmed society, or postmodernism… argued that society and its constitutive struggles had moved beyond the model identified by Marx' (Crossley, 2003: 302), beyond traditional and over-simplified Marxist notions of antagonism between

opposing classes and the centrality of one's position within the economic system (Cohen, 1985; Nilsen, 2007, 2009), and towards attempts at identifying 'the central conflicts and movements definitive of the new era' (Crossley, 2002a: 11). These 'new' movements – such as, for example, the black civil rights movement (Jenkins & Eckert, 1986), the disability movement (Shakespeare, 1993) and environmental movements (Harter, 2011) – become distinct in their dealing with 'material affluence, information overload, confusion over the wide horizon of available cultural alternatives, and system inadequacies in providing institutionally based and culturally normative alternatives for self-identification' (Johnston, Laraña & Gusfield, 1994: 11). My argument here, among other criticisms of new social movement theorising, is that in forcing such a clear break with the ideas of Marx, the majority of theorists from this perspective leave behind what is useful, and that some, particularly those that would label themselves post-Marxists, do so using either a 'straw-man' profile of orthodox Marxism or by confining their focus too rigidly upon particular aspects of Marx's thought. That said, in its contemplation of culture, new social movement theorists provide many useful concepts, which are worth exploring here, in part for their ability to take analysis beyond that of frame theories.

Labelled by Steinmetz (1994: 179) as a 'cluster of characteristics', the new social movements approach is more a set of theories than a unified perspective (c.f. Habermas, 1981; Gorz, 1967; Touraine, 1985; Castells, 1983, 2011; Melucci, 1996; and, for an overview, Johnston et al., 1994). As Flacks (2004: 137) contends, it is 'hardly a 'theory' being articulated, but rather a different set of emphases and questions'. A degree of common ground in these emphases does however allow for some general explication of the category. For example, they each pertain to the analysis of 'broad-based, non-productivist movements' (Tucker, 1991: 75), often made up of informal networks that are more likely to organise in non-hierarchical fashion (Steinmetz, 1994: 180). They have a grounding in 'post-material' (Inglehart, 1977; Melucci, 1984, 1996) or post-industrial conflict (Pichardo, 1997), and a blurring of the lines between the economic and the moral (Offe, 1985), though, according to some, their 'membership' has largely been the professional middle class (Kriesi, 1989; Rose, 1997). As above, away from class analysis, this shift manifests with a move in focus from capital-labour to system-lifeworld conflicts or a predominant focus on civil society over the state (Cohen, 1985; Habermas, 1981). Indeed, numerous theorists discuss the interplay, as part of a substantive shift, between the macro-historical and the micro-historical as structural changes around the mid-nineteenth century are seen to have brought about intrusion, or 'colonization', into the 'terrain of identity' (Hetherington, 1998: 31), or 'lifeworld'

(Habermas, 1981; Pichardo, 1997). These theorists also highlight the importance and fragility of collective identity over structurally determined interests (Buechler, 1995; Stoecker, 1995), often leading to defensive positioning (Steinmetz, 1994). There is therefore an emphasis on cultural codes, identity, lifestyle and the symbolic (Kriesi, Koopmans, Duyvendak & Giugni, 1992; Offe, 1985), as the personal becomes political, identity becomes a goal for social movements, and the strategy and tactics of protest mirror such claims (D'anieri, Ernst & Kier, 1990; Kaufmann, 1990; Pichardo, 1997). This final point is the defining characteristic for a comprehensive understanding of culture, but, I argue, goes too far in emphasising the *ideological basis* of new social movements (Dalton, Kuechler & Burklin, 1990). Three theorists in particular demonstrate the arguments made here, and have been central to the development of the approach: Jürgen Habermas, Alain Touraine, and Alberto Melucci.

Habermas (1981, 1987) has drawn considerable attention for his explication of a 'new politics' of 'individual self-realization', peripheral to the process of production, as opposed to the 'old politics' over work and remuneration at the core of the productive process between employers and workers (1981: 33). Habermas' attempt to understand social movements relies on his conceptualisation of communicative action, an underlying theme that puts analysis from the start onto a cultural footing, to the extent that some would argue he gives up too much to culture and communication (Rose, 1997). His theory of communicative action forms a distinction between the system – 'made up of institutions of the state and the economy' - and the 'symbolically structured' lifeworld (Habermas, 1987: 303) – 'the public and private spheres of everyday life (e.g., family, work, leisure, education)' (Edwards, 2004: 115). In an extension of Weber's rationalization thesis, Habermas argues that the forms of communication legitimised by the system contain a functional rationality that impinges on the potential for interaction within the lifeworld. Communication is thus limited through this process of 'colonization', and the intersubjective and 'cooperative process of interpretation', enabled by communicative rationality within the lifeworld, is hindered by the less taxing, pre-given administrative procedures of the system (Habermas, 1987: 120). In Habermas (1982: 271), then, the lifeworld offers a sense of anchorage, missing from framing, in the form of 'culturally transmitted, prereflexively certain, intuitively available, background knowledge'. He also provides a notion of culture as contested. New social movements, to Habermas, are a necessary form of resistance to defend identities, lifestyles and cultures from colonization, through the 'reassertion… of 'communicative action'', and the reinvigoration of the 'public sphere' (Edwards, 2009: 384), to revitalise, for

example, the bureaucratic and functional 'politics that has shrunk to administration' (Habermas, 1987: 354). There is a strong sense here, particularly as 'language and culture are constitutive for the lifeworld' (Habermas, 1987: 125), of a struggle over 'social reproduction, symbolic interaction, socialisation and identity formation' (Edwards, 2009: 382) at very much a cultural level.

Touraine's (1985) analyses of new social movements also centre on the epochal-historical shift from a material, industrial emphasis to symbolic production within what he termed the post-industrial 'programmed society', where such movements have the potential for significant transformation. The extent of the cultural here is acknowledged in Touraines' concern with 'leaving a society of exploitation and entering a society of alienation'[4] (Touraine, 1971: 61). It is the 'culturally oriented' actor 'involved in structural conflicts' that Touraine (1985: 766) uses as his platform for understanding social movements. These actors struggle for control over historicity – 'the capacity to produce an historical experience through cultural patterns, that is, a new definition of nature and man' (Touraine, 1985: 778) and 'a set of instruments, of cultural orientations, through which social practices are constituted' (Touraine, 1987: 41) – thus surpassing the traditional labour-capital conflict. Any proliferation of identities, lifestyles and cultural manifestation remains rooted in a central mode of organisation, as had, according to Touraine, industrial conflicts; indeed, Touraine would argue consistently that every society has one central conflict (Touraine, Wieviorka & Dubet, 1987). In the 'programmed society', the capitalist class is displaced by technocratic elites that develop cultural control in line with their economic and political agendas, leading to 'the displacement of protest from the economic to the cultural field', and, with this, 'the privatisation of social problems, an anxious search for identity and a new interest in the body' (Touraine, 1985: 784). Touraine's (1988: 10) model brings together some level of agency in the production of cultural artefacts, whether they are images, information or some other manifestation, as he rejects the 'explanation of the actor by the system' and foregrounds instead the study of 'the production of historical situations by the actors'. These actors struggle over culture, including their definitions of themselves, within civil society which 'comprises the social realm in which the creation of norms, identities, institutions, and social relations of domination and resistance are located' (Cohen & Arato, 1992: 515). The cultural field, then, within the 'programmed' epoch, is where the dominant conflict is played out, and is the terrain in which new social movements struggle over

[4]It could be argued here that this inversely mirrors Marx's shift over time from notions of alienation, with its Hegelian idealist roots, to materialist conceptions of exploitation.

meaning and information. Touraine's rigorous analysis here – insisting upon analytical movement from the already-given abstract to the concrete, and, via this data, back to the abstract – retains strong hints of historical materialism, but, as with Habermas, places too much emphasis on the cultural, which is all-too-often discussed as isolated from economic factors.

Another analysis with a focus on action, most likely due to his study under Touraine, emerges from the work of Alberto Melucci (1988, 1989, 1992, 1994, 1996). While disagreeing with Touraine's contention that there is 'one central social movement in any given historical period… [involving] unified actors playing out a role on the stage of history', Melucci (1989: 200-202) agrees that the changes in society associated with communication technologies mark the importance of identification, shared understanding and symbolic resonance. These are all the more important given the 'deep ambiguity' of modern 'complex systems' or societies (Melucci, 1989: 12). Preferring the term 'information society' to 'programmed society', Melucci argues that there are constant attempts to control resources that are bound up with information. This has important implications: people are more reflexive, constructing the world around them through action; as information changes, social life is transformed; material struggles are replaced by symbolic, information-based contestation; and nation-states are more and more restricted by those inter-connected systems of information (Melucci, 1994). Similar to Habermas and notions of colonisation, these constant attempts, and the resulting conflict, 'tend to emerge in those fields of social life which are directly exposed to the most powerful and intense flow of information, and where at the same time individuals and groups are subject to the greatest pressure to incorporate in their everyday behaviour the requirements and the rules of systematic normality' (Melucci, 1996: 9). A challenge to this normality must therefore come, to Melucci, in the form of an alternative 'cultural code'. Analysis of social movement action, then, must look to this deeper level of cultural codes in the 'unity of the present' made up of, 'in one', the historical 'problems and conflicts' (Melucci, 1996: 5). In this sense, Melucci is methodologically 'worlds apart' from frame analysis: he looks to a unity, the whole, in order to make sense of the individual part, or the cultural codes used in resistance, where framing instead predominantly focuses on the frame, which can be considered a single part. In relation to this notion of the 'whole', one of Melucci's (1996: 46) largest contributions to analyses of social movements is the often presupposed or commonly neglected basis of action found in collective identity.

Collective identity brings with it an important movement away from previous assumptions about social movements. Melucci (1996) argues that previous understandings, particularly those based in rational action ideas, make certain untested and unquestioned assumptions, such as the 'expectation-reward model' that implies a gap between the two, and thus a collective understanding of expectations and what might be considered a grievance. Later models, such as Tilly's (1978) 'collective interest' model, presuppose the same collective understanding and thus something already 'in place' to allow the theory to function. Resource mobilization relies on an unhelpful objectification of this identity, where terminology like 'discretionary resources' and 'opportunity structure' imply perception and are thus 'premised on a theory of identity, which, although never explicit, provides the sole foundation of the heuristic capacity of such concepts' (Melucci, 1996: 65). It is because of the 'hidden' broader theories of action and identity within this work that Melucci calls for analysis at the 'intermediate level', where 'individuals assess what they have in common when they decide to act together' (1996: 64). Relying somewhat on Pizzorno (1978), he adds the important point that rational action is surely only rational in accordance with a collective comprehension of what can be considered rational at any given point in time: 'to put it simply, a yardstick to measure the investments and rewards is necessary for the estimation of relative yield from the various possible courses of action, and such a standard is formed previous to the performance of calculation itself, emerging in closer investigation as that which I call identity' (Melucci, 1996: 66). This concept is worthy of attention here because of its emphasis on an underlying cultural basis to all action, which, I argue, is a necessary step in understanding the fundamental role of culture. In its most changeable and historicised forms, it certainly has the potential to account for the over-instrumentalism and voluntarism within framing.

Extensively used across numerous social movement analyses (see for example, Holland, Fox & Daro, 2008; Klandermans, 1992, 1994; Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Taylor & Whittier, 1992), collective identity has been alternatively defined as 'the shared definition of a group that derives from members' common interests, experience, and solidarity' (Taylor & Whittier, 1992: 349), and as an individual's cognitive, moral and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or instituion' (Polletta & Jasper, 2001: 285). Melucci (1996), however, is (in my view, correctly) troubled by the progressive hypostatisation of the term, and insists that it should be treated as a temporary abstraction likely to conceal the complexities of a given situation. Polletta and Jasper (2001) agree that the term has been overstretched analytically and that it must not be treated as synonymous with culture, but

rather seen as a form of culture. Fominaya (2010: 395) argues that we can instead see collective identity, from Melucci's perspective, as a 'not necessarily unified' process that 'involves cognitive definitions about ends, means and the field of action… a process that is given voice through a common language, and enacted through a set of rituals, practices, and cultural artefacts'. To Melucci (1996: 67), any acknowledgement of the process of building action systems must keep in mind that 'expectations are constructed and measured against reality… only based on a negotiated definition of the internal constitution of the actor, and of that actor's field of operation'. Indeed, 'the formation of expectations and the assessment of the possibilities and limits of action presuppose that the actor is able to define itself and its environment' (1996: 67). This conceptualisation of collective identity – understood merely as a concept and 'not a datum or an essence or a 'thing' with a 'real' existence' (Melucci, 1996: 77) – is a tool through which the analyst can access the action systems of a social movement, and clearly gives us major insight into the cultural dimension of movements.

While the concept of collective identity allows for a greater understanding of the depth of culture, like much of new social movement theorising it ultimately remains too bereft of materiality[5]. In their polemic against apparent Marxist reductionism, the new social movement theorists drift too far in the opposite direction, recreating the materialist-idealist binary so well known in Marxist circles, and finding themselves on the latter side of the dualism. The post-material, expressive politics (Hetherington, 1998) of some new social movement theorists, making arguments about 'who we are and how we live' rather than arguments pertaining to 'material distribution in society' (Edwards, 2014: 121), appear to miss any underpinning class-based causation. This is unavoidable, it seems, due to the extent of the break from Marxist analysis. For those that retain some level of class-based analysis, a different set of results can be found. Indeed, talking about similar movements, but under the guise of 'middle class radicalism', Parkin makes a point of historical specificity regarding the direction and intentions of classed protest: where 'working class movements have, *historically*, been devoted primarily to the achievement of aims of a material, bread and butter kind', middle class movements 'are instead more typically concerned with issues of a moral or humanitarian nature' (Parkin, 1968: 40-41, my italics). Others have also made

[5] Melucci's ideas, despite a focus on the symbolic, are not entirely devoid of materiality. Indeed, he claims that any form of production, symbolic or material, is 'symbolically mediated' within a social relationship which 'involves reciprocal recognition of the identity of producers and which… makes exchange possible' (Melucci, 1996: 46). This remains an *interpretation of* material factors, and is also quite vague. Indeed, Melucci often refers to a 'post-material' age (1984: 831; 1996: 144).

this point, highlighting the 'social relations' within which new social movements emerge (Bagguley, 1992: 27). Whether one agrees with the content of these analyses or not, the historicisation of material distribution re-emerges as an important factor in the claims and arguments of social movements. As Eder (1993: 469) argues, 'while peace, environmental, or feminist movements may claim to advance universal goals, the benefits they promote do often serve the middle class'. He continues, 'the middle class has benefited disproportionately from movement campaigns for draft resistance, protective land use policies, and race and gender quotas in the job market'.

The neglect of this from new social movement theorists has been commented on by others. Rose (1997: 469-470) contends that 'by taking the claims of new social movements at face value, they fail to recognise the class interests that are served by these movements' and are thus unable to 'adequately conceptualize the relationships between interests, beliefs, and action'. Foweraker (1995: 22) warns against this, arguing that 'care must be taken not to throw the baby out with the bath water', as 'the identity of social movements is neither the direct expression of structurally shaped and knowable 'interests', nor is it created from nothing by organization and strategic activity'. Flacks (2004: 151), too, suggests that 'the notion that there is a fruitful separation to be made between movements aimed at 'material' interest and those aimed at 'identity' seems… a dead end' when 'liberation movements among subordinated groups clearly have 'material' as well as 'cultural' aims'. More than this, some argue that to direct attention away from material distribution and strictly to focus on the cultural dimensions of protest is a political move that props up particular relations of power, in that it has the potential to move activists 'away from engagement with institutionalized structures of power, toward a kind of apolitical introspection, and into a cycle of fragmentation and diffusion of political energies' (Kauffman, 2001: 24). As Lee (2007: vi) states, trends within new social movements 'are linked most palpably to localized lifestyles, aestheticized symbolisms, ethnic revivalisms, irreconcilable value claims, and the insular attitudes arising from the privatised and immediate lifeworlds'[6]. These are what Williams (1989) would describe as largely ineffective forms of 'militant particularlism', due to this irreconcilability. This is also at a time when

[6]Lee (2007: vi) continues that 'it is mainly this non-progressive spectrum of [new social movements] inimical to the radical politics of solidarity and change that embodies the clearest affinity with the poststructuralist and postmodern rhetoric of multiplicity'. We therefore see the importance of the split between the epistemological and the substantive/historical postmodern arguments, with the former being more closely aligned with poststructuralism (c.f. Handler, 1992; Tetzlaff, 1991), and the latter still potentially holding a place for, to simplify, a critique of capitalism (c.f. Harvey, 2005; Jameson, 1998).

some within social movement studies are calling for a return to the capitalist critique, in order to better contextualise scholarly work (Della Porta, 2015; Hetland & Goodwin, 2013). Whether one agrees with this argument or not, it certainly foregrounds the implicit political nature of culture, and demonstrates the overlap between notions of culture, materiality, production, and politics.

The varied perspectives which we can loosely pull together under the new social movement rubric emphasise culture within more recent social movements, as a structural shift in communicative technology and thus an experiential change brings production of knowledge, information, and the symbolic to centre-stage. This is an important moment because it addresses to a large degree the importance of different and alternative worldviews within social movements, along with conceding, at least to some extent, the complexity involved in analysing this. Habermas' notions of colonization via forms of communication, Touraine's battle over historicity, and Melucci's underlying and often implied collective identity each demonstrate culture as in some way contestable and to be struggled over. We can, of course, argue with the contention that these theories mark a structural shift over time, or instead make the case that contested cultural codes have always been a part of social movements (Buechler, 1995; Plotke, 1990; Taylor & Whittier, 1992; Tucker, 1991), and that there is, in fact, nothing new to be found in new social movements. Either way, new social movements, whether or not we accept the described structural shift, play a substantial role in foregrounding the inadequacy of rigid and overly economic analyses and push us to contemplate culture. Perhaps the most important contribution from new social movement theory is the notion that all activity, around social movement and otherwise, must emerge from somewhere, from some set of values, beliefs and interests. Unfortunately, the theory for all its merit, throws 'the baby out with the bath water' (Foweraker, 1995: 22) in 'moving beyond' Marxist categories and analysis of material distribution in the form of classes, though ironically from a presupposed material shift in social being. Therefore, in a similar vein to the question of where frames come from and why they resonate, new social movement theory struggles to deliver a thorough and comprehensive understanding of how such collective identity is formed. My argument is that a closer look at the relations between the economic, the cultural, and other analytical categories, would enable a stronger analysis of this and the action stemming from such collective identity.

I argue that even the authors claiming the importance of equal consideration for these various analytical categories in a given society do not make enough of a concession. My contention is that new social movement theories are inadequate for their inability to

provide, due to a conceptualisation based on certain Marxist arguments over others[7], an explanation of how, for example, the cultural is deeply imbued with what we might regard as the economic, and vice versa, and that these categories are only to be considered isolatable in the abstract. This seems to be from, according to Nilsen (2009: 100), the fact that new social movement theories struggle with a 'preoccupation with highly abstract, meta-theoretical discourses of social change', and to some, including Nilsen (2007, 2009) and Barker and Dale (1998), they lack the comprehensive and concreteness desired for a thorough and fruitful analysis. For instance, Barker and Dale attempt to reclaim the notion of 'class-struggle', arguing for a change in its 'scope':

> ''class struggle' is not simply the struggle of the exploited for already given 'material interests' within capitalism, but is at its heart a struggle with the potential for transcending the limits of that mode of production. It is not simply economic, but equally political and cultural' (Barker & Dale, 1998: 82-83)

These same authors argue that a look back at what historical materialism has to offer reveals a pertinent way of understanding the role of social movements. In doing so the inadequacies of the framing perspective – of the static, powerless, and dehistoricised conceptualisation of instrumental meaning schemata – as well as of new social movements – the overly idealist or ideational analysis of movements – can be overcome.

2.5 Summary: From Social Movement Theory to Historical Materialism

In an attempt to scrutinise some notion of culture, this chapter has undertaken an exploration of social movement theory to establish how such notions have been employed in the past. Numerous social movement traditions have been sketched out briefly here, some only for the value of those that react to them: from collective behaviour through rational actor models such as resource mobilization. While there are aspects of these that may prove fruitful for understanding culture within social movements, it is not until later, and the specific 'cultural turn' of the social movement studies field, that there appears to be a concerted attempt to redefine and better understand the cultural dimension of social movements. The two broad categories of analysis unpacked here were theories around frame alignment and the various perspectives that loosely constitute new social movement theory. Both of these theories built upon or attempted to rebuild certain foundations already in place: framing largely as a supplement to, or answer to the inadequacies of,

[7]Notably those of Louis Althusser and his colleagues/acolytes, who treat society as a 'social formation', with relatively autonomous ideological, political and economic levels (c.f. Althusser, 1969; Hindess & Hirst, 1975; Poulantzas, 1973).

resource mobilisation; new social movement theories as a response to a supposed structural shift away from older categories of capital-labour relations. This is a factor of crucial importance to the development of each.

On the one hand, framing, emerging from the North American schools of Meadian social behaviourism and interactionism, looks at the generation and mobilization of meaning through intersubjective communication. Useful here for their clear indication of some form of culture are the notions of experiential commensurability and the mobilising potency of frames. However, this chapter has demonstrated its weakness in accounting for the conditioning of what can be used within a certain frame, or, in short, 'how frames get made'. Power, it seems, is overlooked due to both a voluntarist instrumentalism and unbounded potential eclecticism, resulting in what has been called a 'flabby relativism', leading some to argue for 'a little more structuralism and less voluntarism', and a lack of cultural contestation in meaning-making. Numerous authors uphold this critique, suggesting a more rigorous conceptualisation and anchoring of culture, perhaps as certain pre-fabricated cultural stock or as part of a wider hermeneutic process. On the other hand, new social movement theory brings about analysis of culture as a far more comprehensive backdrop, an implication of which is that the rationalism that framing relies upon must first be understood culturally. It looks to similar symbolic and cultural codes at play within movements as does framing, but on the basis of a presupposed cultural unity or totality that is ultimately contested and contestable. All actions, to Melucci (1996:65-67), 'in the first place, are surely based on some set of implicit values and 'premised on a theory of identity' and the 'formation of expectations', from which cultural codes are developed and redeveloped. In some senses, then, he is able to make up for the relativism and seemingly unconditioned meaning-making in framing by investigating the part only as relative to the whole. Unfortunately, in moving away from the material or class analysis of Marxism, much of new social movement theory becomes overly ideational, perhaps even idealist.

Each of these theories has its weaknesses, but each certainly has the capacity to add something to analysis of social movements. However, it is my contention that the most useful components can be consolidated within another theoretical framework, one that is underpinned by historical materialism, initially established by Marx, but further developed my numerous others. This allows one to move with and beyond framing's task of understanding what we might understand as the encoding of a message – emphasising the desirability, the plausibility, and thus the motivation for change – in an attempt to mobilise and include others. It enables this, but allows us at the same time to share Melucci's

concern with the whole – whether seen as Mead's 'generalised other', Smelser's 'generalised beliefs', Swidler's 'prefabricated links', or his own 'collective identity' – before the part, and thus with an understanding of where that frame might come from. Indeed its central concern is the interface between what has come before and what, through human practice, comes after. This can be seen as the 'missing piece from the cultural study of social movements that remains largely unexplored', standing 'prior to the issue of 'how to frame a problem'' (Brown, 2016: 548). Indeed, Brown's (2016: 548) work looks to the notion of 'prospectus' to answer this schism, to open 'the door for social movement scholars to explain the social movements as particular embodiments of certain societal limitations' or 'imagined possibilities'. As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, however, similarly to the work of Steinberg (1995, 1996, 1998), it can do so whilst also rethinking the relationship between what is material, i.e. pertaining to material distribution, and what is cultural, thus enabling analysis to also overcome the 'underdetermined' explanations provided by framing and new social movement theorists (Rose, 1997: 470).

Chapter Three. Historical Materialism, Culture, and Social Movements

The last chapter delved into the field of social movement theory in an attempt to unpack some understanding of culture. It was demonstrated that aspects across its chronology may provide some utility in this regard, particularly in the forms of frame analysis and new social movement theory, but that overall it lacks any substantial understanding of culture. On the one hand, investigations using frame analysis were too static, overly voluntarist, and bereft of any analysis of wider power-relationships. On the other, those looking into new social movements went too far into the ideational, deeply hindering attempts to understand the materiality of culture. This chapter will look to overcome these inadequacies through a historical materialist approach, thereby bringing into analysis a processual sense of human activity conditioned by previous human action, deeply intertwined with the materiality in which this activity is undertaken. This will mark the project's theoretical contribution before moving into empirical territory, to better understand this approach within the remaining chapters. Numerous trajectories will be pulled together here in an eclectic use of the likes of Antonio Gramsci, Raymond Williams, EP Thompson, and Stuart Hall. Given these authors' histories, this will inevitably be in relation to the ideas of Karl Marx but in a forward-thinking (i.e. non-dogmatic) and pragmatic manner. The chapter will begin with historical materialism, working through its adoption by Gramsci, supplemented by his employment of 'hegemony'. In a critique of Marxist thought, the chapter will then proceed to work with developments around culture that emerge to a large degree from Gramsci's account. During this exposition, and where possible, the theory of the last chapter will be drawn upon once more in order to discuss what analytical capacity it still offers and where this could be built upon. Finally, and on the basis of what precedes it, I introduce the importance of popular culture in relation to the study of social movements. As stated, this chapter begins with the historical materialism of Marx, looking more specifically at its underpinning methodology.

3.1 Historical Materialism and the Pragmatological Dialectic

In trying to locate some use of historical materialism for the study of social movements, Nilsen (2007: 2) draws upon an interpretation of Marx's 'species being' (*gattungswesen*) as 'the ability of human beings to satisfy their needs through the conscious deployment of capacities in historically evolving social formations'. This conception draws predominantly from the ideas put forth in Marx's earlier works, the *1844 Philosophic and Economic Manuscripts* (Marx & Engels, 1961) and *The German Ideology* (Marx & Engels, 2007). Within these can be observed a particular methodological basis, from which a form of social

movement analysis can be derived. Described by Adamson (1973) as a pragmatological dialectic[1], this involved a movement beyond all previous philosophy – via the apparent rupturing of the subject-object dichotomy, so pervasive since the ideas of Socratic philosophy (Fracchia, 1991) – as Marx scrutinised what could be taken as given, constant, or universal in the human condition. After deliberation elsewhere, Marx asserted that the human is 'not only a social animal, but an animal that can be individualized only within society' (1981: 189). He begins, instead, to think the essence as the 'ensemble of social relations' (Marx & Engels, 2007), particular to a specific 'cultural-temporal setting' (Adamson, 1973: 109), and where the notion of a rational, calculating agent is itself particular to a certain set of social relations[2]. Indeed, this already removes us from the methodological individualist and calculating actor of rational choice models in social movement theory, themselves framed in the language of Enlightenment philosophers and economists that would treat the individual 'not as a historical result, but as the starting point of history' (Marx, 2007: 1-2). This framework around man as ensemble is treatment of man as a natural being, but whose nature is conditioned and limited by the outside world.

The process by which this conditioning takes place Marx describes as the first premises of 'all human history'. The first of these is that 'man must be in a position to live in order to make history' (Marx & Engels, 2007: 48): he must reproduce his own material existence, as alluded to by Nilsen, by fulfilling primary needs that emerge – eating, drinking, habitation, clothing, etc. – through the development of capacities. The second premise, Marx (and Engels, 2007: 49) claims, is that the 'satisfaction of the first need… leads to new needs[3]', and the third involves, once the first two have been realised[4], men creating other men[5]. These are three of very few aspects that can be considered universal, forming what can be regarded as a 'production paradigm' (Jones, 2006). The point of interest here is that one's

[1]To Adamson, this is one of three forms of dialectic in the entirety of Marx's work, signalling what he believes are shifts in Marx's thought over time. We can describe this as pragmatological because it treats 'history as *process*, as open-ended and indeterminate eventuation – but not for that reason devoid of rational *logic* or of determining *pressures* – in which categories are defined in particular contexts but are continuously undergoing historical redefinition, and whose structure is not pre-given but protean, continually changing in form and in articulation' (Thompson, 1978b: 113).

[2]As evident in numerous recent works (c.f. Brockling, 2015; Dardot & Laval, 2013; Ventura, 2016).

[3]The detailed development of needs is well documented in the Introduction to the *Grundrisse* (Marx, 1993; c.f. Hall, 2003).

[4]Though as the process continues, there needn't be such precise ordering to these events (Williams, 1977a).

[5]The use of 'man' here is in no way political, but is to adopt the language of Marx and his contemporaries.

needs are particular to the time that one is born into, once created by 'other men'. The precise arrangement of needs in any given conjuncture is regarded by Marx as an *anlage* – translated roughly as 'facility, arrangement, installation, or disposition' (Nilsen, 2007: 4) – within which[6] needs and capacities work dialectically over time. Man's intervention into nature here for self-(*re*)production, via these needs and capacities, is amplified by social relations. For example, the development and dissemination of simple tools, a rudimentary division of labour and the exchange of goods are all *social* accomplishments. This conspicuous sociality marks the fourth premise and is the moment that Marx regards as the beginning of all human history; a moment that includes, in as much as a division of labour emerges between particular roles[7], conflict and contradiction. Important here is the exposition of a framework whereby one is born into the world, socialised into the current needs and capacities, and is then able to impact once again upon that contested world through the social means available. Already, in this brief elaboration, there is some utility for understanding social movements, as we are able to locate particular movement efforts in accordance with the historically concurrent organisation of material and social relations.

At this moment, however, a potential difficulty emerges – a difficulty that is central to our understanding of social movements and the role of culture within them. This is to be found in the language used by Marx around the 'double relation' of man: to both the social world and the natural world. Marx's discussion[8] appears to emphasise the material relations as foundational or as infrastructural (*grundlage*). The social dimensions, it seems, then take on a largely dependent character and are superstructural (*uberbau*): for instance, he discusses the 'ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process', where 'the phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process' (Marx, 2007: 47). Later, Marx (1904: 11) would claim that 'the sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society – the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness'. A cursory glance indicates that there is an identity of direct correspondence or immediacy between the two levels (Hall, 2003): 'since each mode of material and social organization was historically specific, so the forms of social life corresponding it was bound to assume a 'definite' and historically distinct shape and form (Hall, 1977a: 317). Taking this as given

[6] Though only through human activity and in relation with the surrounding material conditions.

[7] Marx discusses the development of mental labour over material labour, and the necessity of those labouring materially to provide for those that are not.

[8] Remembering that his task in *The German Ideology* is a polemic against idealism (Hall, 1986; Williams, 1961).

ensures a view of superstructures 'totally devoid of their own specific effects' (Hall, 1986: 31). Through the admirable, but ultimately inadequate[9], efforts of conveyance by Engels after Marx's death, and the development of this thesis by the likes of Plekhanov and Bukharin, this was to become the basis of twentieth century orthodox Marxism, from which any understanding of social movements would be deeply hindered. However, alternative interpretations of such determination, partly in response to this, sought to develop an understanding bringing the social back to the fore, particularly around various notions of ideology (see, for example, Mepham, 1972). As Hall (1977b: 316) states, '[p]recisely how to think this relationship between material and social production and the rest of a developed social formation, constitutes perhaps the most difficult aspect of a materialist theory'[10]. Indeed, 'no such theory exists, fully pre-packaged, in Marx and Engels's works' (Hall, 1986: 29).

3.2 Determining Culture

It is at this point, the relationship between the material and the socio-cultural, that Hall's aims intersect with my own, as it is the material and socio-cultural conditioning of action that, I argue, fills the void in frame analysis, thus moving us away from the simplistic voluntarism and the practically debilitating relativism of radical pluralism, whilst also demonstrating the significance of materiality to understanding culture – against the inadequacies of new social movement theorising. In developing the ideas of Marx, and those that move from and beyond him, it is possible to establish a notion of culture that takes into account the conditioning impact of human activity over time. As stated, Marx's efforts at this positioning of the social and cultural stem largely from his discussions of ideology – a category that pervades almost the entirety of his work, but very often in different forms. In *The German Ideology* – where the 'ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas' (Marx, 2007: 64) – one can see the negative connotations attached to the term, which is largely to be expected given the condemning use of the term in the seventeenth and eighteenth century (Williams, 1983) and the corresponding polemical nature of the

[9]Engels himself admits this in a letter to Mehring in 1893: '...Marx and I always failed to stress enough in our writings and in regard to which we are all equally guilty. That is to say, we all laid, and *were bound* to lay, the main emphasis, in the first place, on the *derivation* of political, juridical and other ideological notions, and of actions arising through the medium of these notions, from basic economic facts' (cited in Tucker, 1978: 766).

[10]As Inglis and Hughson (2003: 26) argue, the question that later Marxists have struggled with is 'if cultural factors are partly independent of the material base, to what extent are they are they actually autonomous?'

discussion (Hall, 1986). Williams (1977: 59) explains that the 'language of 'reflexes', 'echoes', 'phantoms', and 'sublimates'… has in repetition been disastrous', alluding to later adoption of this identity by others. Whilst still subject to variation, later usages of ideology, and thus the relationship between material and social, appear different. For example, much later he discusses the 'ideological forms in which men become conscious of… conflict and fight it out' (Marx, 1904: 12). Earlier in the same passage he claims that 'it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness' (1904: 11-12). This brings appropriately to the fore the sociality involved in any understanding of material relations; indeed, the mode of production *is* made up of means and relations. Even later, in *Capital*, Marx talks of 'distortions' within capitalism – 'the conceptions of the merchant, stockbroker, and banker, are necessarily quite distorted' (Marx, 1999: 214) – which could well be taken to align simply with the negative view of ideology akin to simplistic 'falsehoods' (Hall, 1986: 33). However, this is to overlook Marx's methodological point, important here, of understanding the entirety of the complex relations, the *whole*, before being able to understand the *part*. As he states before this last quote, 'it is self-evident that conceptions which arise about the laws of production in the minds of agents of capitalist production and circulation will diverge drastically from these real laws and will merely be the conscious expression of the visible moments' (Marx, 1999: 214)[11].

Besides the general confusion around this term, and where there are clear glimmers of light within heavily-documented darkness, later theorists such as Gramsci, Williams and Hall develop healthily upon these otherwise- or often-neglected fragments, and they do so in relation to a particular work of Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (2008). According to Jones (2006: 44), it is this work that emphasised in some small way the 'sufficient autonomy' of 'cultural forms such that their alignment with specific social forces is seen as a determinate product of their 'homologous' but convergently corresponding role'. Here, aligned with the productive, pragmatological thesis already outlined, 'art and ideas can be seen as structurally formed, but then also actively formed, in their own terms, within a general social order and its complex internal relations' (Williams, 1989b: 224). From this point, to Williams (1977: 87), determination no longer entails a simplistic mirroring – as above – but is rather a complicated dialectic relationship between the 'setting of limits', through socialisation into and *experience* within what we might understand as the

[11]It must also be said, and as demonstrated above, that Marx talks often of consciousness, and thus gives plenty of thought to the 'lived processes', even if his analysis is often base- or structure- 'heavy'.

concurrent anlage and the 'exertion of pressures' upon the social mode[12]. It can be argued, then, that determination refers to a range of potentialities, a range in consciousness, a range of what can be actively used or worked by people in their temporal, cultural locations. It is thus limited but from those limitations are derived the possibility of pressures to those limits in whichever field of action. What is often termed socialisation, perhaps best described as experience[13] - the 'practical and tacit knowledge that we as human beings generate about the material… world through our encounters and interactions' within it (Nilsen, 2007: 11) – becomes one's point of entry into this range. Consider Williams' argument that

> '[t]he growing society is there, yet it is also made and remade in every individual mind. The making of a mind is, first, the slow learning of shapes, purpose, and meanings, so that work, observation and communication are possible. Then, second, but equal in importance, is the testing of these in experience, the making of new observations, comparisons, and meanings[14]' (1989b: 4)

The point here is that the 'making of a mind' is subject to limits and once made is able to change the conditions of such 'making', moving forward through experientially-conditioned activity. There are similarities, then, with Meluccian (1996) notions of collective identity here: the predispositions and anchoring that were largely missing within the framing model. However, the argument here brings in the material dimension of this anchoring, conspicuously overlooked by new social movement theorising. Indeed, the range of potentialities implied by this conditioning is, then, *at once*, and in 'complex unity' (Williams, 1977a: 139), cultural, economic, social, political, and so on. Not only does this take analysis away from the inadequacies of new social movement theorising, it also provides an opportunity to remove us from the conceptualisations found in structural Marxism that have pervaded much recent Marxist debate.

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[12]Determination, historically, should not therefore be treated 'as a single force, or a single abstraction of forces, but as a process in which real determining factors – the distribution of power or of capital, social and physical inheritance, relations of scale and size between groups – set limits and exert pressures, but neither wholly control nor wholly predict the outcome of complex activity within or at these limits, and under or against these pressures' (Williams, 1974: 130).

[13]Following Marx, then, Williams (1977: 37) regards experience as the 'lost middle term between the abstract entities, 'subject' and 'object', on which the propositions of idealism and orthodox materialism are erected.' Thompson (1978b: 9-10), too, regards this category as 'indispensable to the historian, since it comprises the mental and emotional response, whether of an individual or of a social group, to many inter-related events or to many repetitions of the same kind of event'

[14]This is not, then, limited to childhood and adolescence, and 'we also have to consider the question of limitation and pressure as these go on through adult life, at a level which is other than constitutive' (Williams, 2015: 357)

According to Louis Althusser, the central figure in structuralist variants of Marxism,

> 'Marx conceives of the structure of every society as constituted by 'levels' or 'instances' articulated by a specific determination: *the infrastructure* or economic base… and the *superstructure*, which itself comprises two 'levels' or 'instances': the political-legal level (law and the state) and the ideological level (the various ideologies: religious, moral, legal, political, and so on)' (2014: 53)

We have already seen, and overcome, the division here between base and superstructure, but Althusser supplements it with a focus on economic, political and ideological 'levels'. There is not the scope here to detail the polemic between Althusser and his critics, but he offers an ahistorical and largely unexamined set of 'static categories' (Thompson, 1978b: 129), where each has its own 'relative autonomy' and ability of 'reacting back' on the others (Althusser, 2014: 55) within a specifically organised 'social formation[15]'. Althusser's is a deeply theoreticist engagement with Marxism, where 'all knowledge is theoretical knowledge' and 'knowledge of the 'real' is always linguistically and symbolically formed' (Stevenson, 1995: 104). There is, then, no hope of 'getting outside of ideology' (Hall, 1997: 30) as in this conceptualisation it expands to 'devour the entire terrain of lived experience' (Williams, 1989a: 24). To most Althusserians 'only theory can escape ideology' (Williams, 1981b: 63), leaving no room for any understanding of its social and material production (Jones, 2006). While providing a useful charge of complexity and multiplicity, for example in 'positive forms' of the concept 'over-determination' (Williams, 1977a: 88), I argue here that Althusser's account is better replaced with one that treats society as a '*constitutive process* with very powerful pressures which are both expressed in political, economic and cultural formations and, to take the full weight of 'constitutive', are internalized and become 'individual wills'' (Williams, 1977a: 87, *my italics*). As Inglis and Hughson (2003: 108) make clear, 'each aspect is only ever relatively 'cultural', 'economic' or whatever, as they are never wholly inseparable from each other'.

Thompson, in his polemic against Althusser, adds to this that these 'categories' are based on analytical engagement with evidence, and warns of the dangers of convenient hypostatisation:

> 'Insofar as a notion finds endorsement from the evidence, then one has every right to say that it *does* exist, 'out there', *in* the real history. It does not of course actually exist, likes some plasma adhering to the facts… what we are saying is that the notion (concept, hypothesis as to causation) has been brought

[15]Meiksins Wood (2016: 57) makes the point that this is a potentially misleading translation of *Gesellschaftsformen* in Althusser's reading of *The Grundrisse*.

> into a disciplined dialogue with the evidence, and it has been shown to 'work'' (1978b: 59)

Such engagement is reserved too for one of the most contentious concepts within Marxist debates, one that retains potential for understanding social movements (Rose, 1997): class[16]. Thompson (1978a: 147) argues, for example, that 'we know about class because people have repeatedly behaved in class ways… and at a certain stage (the 'mature' formations of class) we observe the creation of institutions, and of a culture with class notations, which admits of trans-national comparisons[17]' (Thompson, 1978a: 147). As Meiksins Wood (2016: 80) points out, Thompson's 'historical project presupposes that relations of production distribute people into class situations, that these situations entail essential antagonisms and conflicts of interest, and that they therefore create conditions of struggle… Class formations and the discovery of class consciousness', then, 'grow out of the process of struggle, as people 'experience' and 'handle' their class situations'. Thompson's dealings with class, then, are dealings in fact with class *struggle* and the formation of class out of the interests and position into which one is born. Similar in its doctrine-like application to class, the *mode of production,* which is shaped by the antagonisms of class activity, must also be considered in its 'generality and elasticity', as 'expectations rather than… rules', (Thompson, 1978: 62). The 'simultaneity of expression' of these categories – economic, political, ideological, etc. – 'in all areas of social life', instead of any understanding based on the 'notion of primacy… of the economic', leads Thompson (1977: 265-266) to call into question 'the notion that it is possible to describe a mode of production in 'economic' terms'. The capitalist mode of production, from this view, should not be considered as simply 'capital in the totality of its relations', but that the 'logic of capitalist process has found expression within all the activities of a society, and exerted a determining pressure upon its development and form: hence entitling us to speak of capitalism, or of capitalist societies' (Thompson, 1978: 84-85).

[16]Indeed, Thompson (1978b: 62) argues that it is the 'misfortune' of Marxist historians that certain 'concepts are common currency in a wider intellectual universe, are adopted in other disciplines, which impose their own logic upon them and reduce them to static, a-historical categories' and that '[n]o historical category has been more misunderstood, tormented, transfixed, and de-historicised than the category of social class'.

[17]The idea that class is a category based on observation is clear in Hobsbawm (1984), for example, who explains how the proletariat *as a class* in nineteenth century Europe was the *first* to organise based on its material existence, and thus to actively shape history *as* a class. This demonstrates 'class' as an elastic, analytical category.

Culture, then, in this 'simultaneity', is 'indissolubly mental *and* material' (Williams, 1989b: 214) as an individual's constitutive experience is *relatively* cultural, and in this sense its distribution and patterning one can understand as, given the specific interests and relations into which an individual is born and must then act in relation to, very much classed. Practical consciousness, then, can be seen as an active depository for this process – the result of ongoing labour with what is made available socially and materially for this collective action – as it is both constituted by and further constitutes cultural production. Adopting Volosinov's (1986) interpretation of Marxian consciousness moves potential analytical conclusions away from any 'abstracted 'mode of production'' or 'abstracted 'psychology'' (Williams, 1977a: 87). This is not pure[18] consciousness, but practical consciousness, developed through experience as a social product 'with the curse of being "burdened" with matter' (Marx, 2007: 50). Indeed, to Marx (2007: 47), 'consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process'. There is, here, a dialectical relationship between experience, within the confines of pre-existing understandings or notations, and practical consciousness, from which one can actively work upon these notations. We must therefore be concerned – perhaps in a similar way to Melucci (1996) in his preoccupations with collective identity – with the 'formation of, and the tensions within, social consciousness', as experienced events 'impinge upon, thrust into, [and] break against' it (Thompson, 1978b: 199). To some, the focus here shifts to the 'raw material' of consciousness and experience (Storey, 2006: 38) and to 'what is actually being lived… not only what is thought is being lived' (Williams, 1977a: 131). As the moment between what has already been conditioned – translated through experience into practical consciousness – and further production upon these conditions, *practice* is to be understood as the 'fundamental ontological category' (Nilsen, 2009: 13), the 'dynamo of change' (Nilsen, 2007: 10), and the conduit for the 'dialectic relationship between human will and economic structure', and thus what Gramsci (1971: 402-403), after Antonio Labriola (1912), would come to call the *philosophy of praxis*[19].

In what is seemingly a development of Marx's methodology, the relationship between structure and superstructure here shifts toward an acknowledgement of the whole social process, as manifest in human practical activity. As Williams (1989b: 201) argues:

[18]This purity of consciousness is an idealist ideology that Marx considers a traditionally German problematic.

[19]A term adopted, at least in part, to avoid the censorship of the warden in Mussolini's Fascist prisons, where Gramsci had been detained from 1926 until his death in 1937.

> 'The whole thrust of Marx's reading of history was then, first, to insist that all cultural processes were initiated by humans themselves, and, second, to argue that none of them could be fully understood unless they were seen in the context of human activities as a whole[20]'

This places us within close proximity to Touraine's (1988) argument regarding the role of the actor in producing historical situations, and is an account of Williams' productivist understanding of culture as 'ordinary' and of human life as inherently creative (1989a). This he produced through a critique of cultural notions resembling an 'anthropologically flattened' (Jones, 2006: 13), 'whole way of life' (Williams, 1981: 11) or as privileged 'high culture', amounting to 'our best self' (Williams, 1965: 95), or the 'best that has been thought and known' (Arnold, 2006: 53). These conceptions of culture, it seems, 'range from a significantly total to a confidently partial dimension of reference' (Williams, 1981: 11), each of which should be individually rejected for the 'dialectically 'expansive' conception' (Jones, 2006: 91) of 'culture as ordinary'. Such a connection, making our productivist paradigm culturally productivist, provides a platform to better understand and assess the transformative potential of social movements, based in the creativity of human activity. The necessary complexity implied by this understanding remains open for analysis, particularly if one adopts aspects of Gramsci's cultural-material[21] theory of hegemony.

Within his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci (1971: 181) discusses social analysis in the form of 'an evaluation of the degree of homogeneity, self-awareness, and organisation attained by various social classes'. One can understand such relations of force through analysis of the material forces in play at any given time[22] as well as through the relations of political force which Gramsci divides into three historically-evident manifestations. The first of these is the economic-corporate, which includes a narrow understanding of class membership or common conditions (for example, one tradesman feeling obliged to stand by another, but

[20]A reading taken primarily from Marx's Eighteenth Brumaire, where he states, for example: 'Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking' (Marx & Engels, 2007: 47).

[21]Others prefer to refer to this as a cultural theory alone, remarking of Gramsci that he is the 'theorist of the superstructures' (Stoddart, 2007).

[22]This can be explored using the physical sciences (general calculation), and can be seen as the 'level of development of the material forces of production …the number of firms and their employees, the number of cities or the given urban population, etc.' (Gramsci, 1971: 180-181). This, presumably combined with further determinations, provides an angle by which to test 'the degree of realism and practicability of the various ideologies which have been born on its own terrain' (Gramsci, 1971: 181).

not by someone from another form of trade). The second can be seen as the class-corporate, where an expansion of perceived class membership leads to a consciousness and solidarity of common conditions, in the perceptible economic field at least. The third historical manifestation subsumes those prior to it and is thus…

> '…the most purely political phase, and marks the decisive passage from the structure to the sphere of the complex superstructures, it is the phase in which previously germinated ideologies become 'party', come into confrontation and conflict, until only one of them, or at least a single combination of them, tends to prevail, to gain the upper hand, to propagate itself throughout society – bringing about not only a unison of economic and political aims, but *also* intellectual and moral unity, posing all the questions around which the struggle rages not on corporate level but on a 'universal' plane, and thus creating *the hegemony of a fundamental social group* over a series of subordinate groups' (Gramsci, 1971: 181-182, my italics)

This is the political acknowledgement of a social class's 'present and future development' (Gramsci, 1971: 181), and is made possible by human action conditioned – that is, variably determined – by a whole, or total, social process. It is also the historicisation of wilful class formation[23], which takes priority, particularly in the Prison Notebooks, over the purportedly objective dimensions of class stratification. Through hegemony, we find the 'potentiality to theoretically escape the essentialist traps' inherent in mass society theses, such as those of crowd behaviour and early Frankfurt School writings, and romanticised notions of authentic cultures, so prevalent within prevailing new social movement understandings (Stevenson, 1995: 37). This focus on the development of class consciousness is also similar to Thompson's focus on class formation, and pre-empts Melucci's interest in collective identity.

Our dealings with social movements in their historically-located social and material relations are much the better for hegemony's 'insistence on relating the 'whole social process' to specific distributions of power and influence': indeed, 'to say that 'men' define and shape their whole lives is true only in abstraction. In any actual society there are specific inequalities in means and therefore in capacity to realize this process' (Williams, 1977a: 108), perhaps best demonstrated by the shift from industrial to information or programmed societies[24] (Castells, 1996; Touraine, 1971). What Gramsci defines as relations of force, then, are abstract ways of attempting to understand the distribution of this power and influence,

[23]Gramsci leans on Sorel's (1999: 118) notion of deliberately foregrounded myths: 'a body of images', such as the General Strike, 'capable of evoking instinctively' sentiment that leads to action.

[24]While some, such as certain new social movement theorists, consider this a fundamental break with previous ways of being, and the basis of novel theorising, it could be argued as a shift in inequalities for historical reasons.

along with the conditions necessary for its execution and maintenance. Through Gramsci's analysis of hegemonic conditions, especially within modern parliamentary forms of governance, power is 'characterised by the combination of force and consent… without force predominating excessively over consent'[25] (1971: 80). The term must therefore be distinguished from dominio, or 'rule', which is evident in the work of others (c.f. Engels, 1973; Lukes, 2005). Gramsci does not sacrifice this sense of power, but argues that the acquisition of spontaneous and active consent is a far more powerful and lasting form of domination. Consent is thus complimented by 'the apparatus of state coercive power which 'legally' enforces discipline on those groups who do not 'consent' either actively or passively' (Gramsci, 1971: 12-13). Hegemony, within which certain groups remain subordinate and others dominant, means the continual establishment of a constantly moving 'compromise equilibrium', whereby the leading group 'makes sacrifices of an economic-corporate[26] kind' (Gramsci, 1971: 161).

With the full acknowledgement of the whole social process – arguably best understood as a dialectical movement of 'becoming', where humans change in relation to their material and social environment before changing that environment once more (Gramsci, 1971: 355) – the possibility of change through intellectual persuasion and political negotiation emerges (Hoare & Sperber, 2016). Such a move brings the political and social posturing of social movements to the fore, but with a more in-depth account of where this posturing comes from than frame analysis, and, in what Thompson argues is a 'simultaneity of expression', with a focus also upon material distribution, unlike most theories of new social movements. In a way perhaps that other theories of social movements fall short, it also points us toward the historical relations of power and influence that impact on the ability of social movements to effect change, via the range of what is available for production. The question now arises of how this, in practice, can be accessed in analysis, which inevitably entails abstraction as a form of hermeneutical guidance when working with concrete historical detail.

[25]This division in forms of power into consent and coercion is evident in Gramsci's (1971: 170) adoption of Machiavelli's rhetorical Centaur: half man, half beast.

[26]As above, economic-corporate is used to refer to that local level of identity between those with obvious similarities.

3.3 Getting at Culture: Common Sense, Cultural Leadership and Hegemony

One way, as has already been implicated here, of comprehending culture is through the notion of ideology. Indeed, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, social movement theory has often turned to ideology as an important factor, though this has at times been confused, as with the example of framing[27]. Ideology can certainly be a useful avenue for understanding the pervasive impact of culture within social movements and elsewhere, but, given its heavy and diverse baggage, as a concept it must be well defined – 'sufficiently precise and practicable' (Williams, 1977a: 71) – so as to avoid its many pitfalls. The term itself has 'passed from meaning 'science of ideas' and 'analysis of the origin of ideas' to meaning a specific 'system of ideas' (Gramsci, 1971: 376). At a particular point in the term's history it took upon negative connotations and came to be ascribed to a sense of 'false consciousness', the process of being 'duped', and thus as a term of abuse (Williams, 1983). According to Williams (1977b), the structuralist inclinations – of structuralist linguistics and structuralist anthropology – drawn from Althusser and observable in some Cultural Studies analysis, tend toward an overly synchronic and unhelpfully complete account of ideology. Here, ideology is unable to work with the 'relatively mixed, confused, incomplete, or inarticulate consciousness of actual men' (Williams, 1977a: 109) as 'models' of ideology consist of 'coherent and totalizing (masking) systems' discussed in a hypostatized way as 'texts and codes' (Williams, 1977b: 13). Indeed, as Gramsci (1971: 451) indicates, 'a practical error which has many adherents is the utopia of fixed and universal languages[28]'. The notion of hegemony, here, in its most historical and complicated form, is offered as a useful remedy to this structuralism; as Stoddart (2007: 193) explains, '[w]hereas ideology connotes closure and a unidirectional flow of power, hegemony emphasises the inherent conflict involved in constructing networks of power through knowledge'. In a move that is clearly advantageous for any understanding of social movements, we can thus move beyond power as mere 'ideological compulsion', and give necessary acknowledgement to the role of 'cultural leadership' (Hall, 1982: 81), or what Gramsci (1971: 57) describes as 'intellectual and moral leadership'.

[27] It is variously, though not exhaustedly, understood as 'a set of beliefs that used to justify or challenge a given social-political order' (Zald, 1996: 262), a 'body of doctrine, beliefs, and myths' (Blumer, 1967: 210), an 'action plan propagated by a specific political party or movement' (Inglehart, 1990: 43).

[28] Such a point makes more sense with an understanding of Gramsci's theoretical development from the formation and development of language to the social, material and cultural stage (c.f. Ives, 2004b).

Ideology retains a role here, but is not the wholly inescapable 'condition of all conscious life' (Williams, 1981: 63) as depicted by Althusser's 'self-generating theoreticist 'machine'' (Hall, 2016: 380). It can be seen, rather, as a pre-cursor, as the 'ideas and belief systems' (Ives, 2004b: 14), though more importantly here is the direction that these beliefs direct elements[29] of culture in particular conjunctures; that is, and this is particularly important when moving beyond simplistic references to the reflective base and superstructure metaphor, these belief systems or worldviews provide 'intention' toward certain ends within the social totality (Williams, 1973: 7). In this sense, ideology can be understood as the 'cement' working to preserve 'the ideological unity of the entire social bloc' (Gramsci, 1971: 328), and as a way of breaking down any 'false generality' of culture as 'a whole way of life' into 'discriminate ascriptions to specific classes and other groups' (Williams, 1981b: 29). As above, there is no comprehensive ideological system perfectly aligned with the 'psychology' of society's populace. In place of this there is sedimentation over time, a build-up of diverse elements from different historical eras that have been selectively and actively continued or combined with other elements[30]. Practice, and practical consciousness, is therefore constituted of 'traces' and are thus a 'variable combination of old and new', a 'momentary equilibrium of cultural relations corresponding to the equilibrium of social relations' (Gramsci, 1971: 736-737). These traces are encountered in experience as 'common sense', the 'folklore' of philosophy', the 'fragmentary, incoherent, and inconsequential' composite elements that become incorporated into particular belief systems with certain intent, or guidance (Gramsci, 1971: 419). In this way, common sense as a sediment becomes the 'document of its historical effectiveness' (Gramsci, 1971: 144). Indeed, these are 'constantly transforming' (Gramsci, 1971: 326) and make up the basis of belief systems[31], or ideology as we might call them, as they are modified, articulated or combined in a particular 'ideological direction'. We can therefore conceptualise ideology as 'a process of signification that serves to secure relations of domination' (Stevenson, 1995: 37). As above, the role of 'cultural leadership' is foregrounded here, and the question emerges of who is able to carve out this historical direction from the common sense content available.

[29]The term 'element' is used here, though it is not meant in a post-Marxist sense of empty signifiers.

[30]Once again, this relies upon the production paradigm so important to historical materialism.

[31]As Gramsci (1971: 325-326) states: '…common sense is a collective noun, like religion: there is not just one common sense, for that too is a product of history and a part of the historical process'.

To Gramsci (1971: 57), 'a social group can, and indeed must, already exercise 'leadership' before winning governmental power[32]'. On the basis of such a notion, and all that has led to it, this chapter is now in a position to discuss the analytical positioning of those variously attributed the titles of 'social movement entrepreneur' (McCarthy & Zald, 1977), 'movement strategist' (Ganz, 2010), or 'framer'. Leadership is certainly important within social movements, but the historical, social and cultural location of those leaders must be considered just as much of the problematic. This is, however, often overlooked. Gramsci's account of leadership relies heavily upon the, once again abstract[33], notion of 'intellectuals'. Seeing the now obvious flaws in Lenin's (1973: 28) contention that revolutionary theory must be brought to subordinate groups 'from without', Gramsci (1971: 14) makes the point that 'all men are intellectuals' as all humans have both a worldview and capacity for mental labour, though most do not take up the role of social functionary. In line with the production paradigm, and another material 'check' upon the ideational, it would be wrong to assume these capacities are merely 'intrinsic', 'rather than in the ensemble of the system of relations in which these activities… have their place within the general complex of social relations' (Gramsci, 1971: 8). Intellectuals are thus formed by their experience within certain material conditions and the practical consciousness of the cultural relations within which they are embedded. Thus:

> 'Every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields' (Gramsci, 1971: 5)

The role of the 'organic intellectual', then, is to maintain a dialogical relation with the group whilst articulating the intention-led premises for future action. With this in mind, it is the ideological reorganisation of common sense in a way that resonates with the experience of others within the group that can be understood as 'cultural' or 'intellectual and moral leadership'. Perhaps the biggest obstacle to this reorganisation are the perhaps waning, perhaps practically obsolete, perhaps still powerful groups, which nonetheless have influential sway over many; these are the 'traditional intellectuals', those that then disregard any reorganisation via the dominant norms of hegemony, or those that attempt to

[32]As historical categories, such claims remain in dialogue with empirical observation, though this seems still to resonate to a large degree.

[33]In a letter from prison to his sister-in-law, Gramsci (2011: 84) states that the research on intellectuals he has undertaken remains very broad.

incorporate the claims into some changed hegemony – which is hegemonic directly because of this ability to change and incorporate[34].

While the diachronic side, in its social-material encompassed form, is here emphasised, the synchronic component of the conjuncture is that point of contact in a person or social group's active experience[35], and the amalgamation or product of actively worked composite material. It is thus the case that this leadership does not work within a vacuum, but a complex field of opportunities and constraints. Indeed, Gramsci's concrete analysis attempts to do 'justice to the growing complexity of civil society and the way in which so-called private organizations maintained the hegemony of ruling groups in society' (Schwarzmantel, 2015: 153). Common sense forms are a product of, and disseminated within, the ensemble of institutions and their various manifestations most generally regarded as 'private' (Gramsci, 1971: 419). This is 'the terrain in which classes contest for power', where 'hegemony is exercised', and 'where the terms of the relations of structure and superstructure are fought out' (Hall, Lumley & McLennan, 1977: 47). Gramsci's understanding of civil society therefore includes the political party, the press, and cultural formations from meeting groups to the family itself; the ever changing manifestations of culture that Williams (1977) would designate as 'institutions'. To align with Gramsci's own methodology the term clearly requires contextualisation and the scrutiny that a different epoch, era, or conjuncture demands. For example, Gill (1993: 5) foregrounds the crisis of post-war hegemony, and the 'range of globalising forces which are integrating the material, political, social and cultural life of so many people on the planet' and thus expanding and complicating what we mean by civil society. Again, we might look to the role of information distribution and communication, as with Habermas, Touraine, and Melucci, as a particular configuration of this civil society. Indeed, it is up to the researcher to investigate the various 'elements of civil society' (Gramsci, 1971: 235) that correspond to the ideational tendencies of any conjuncture. Civil society is thus the cultural battleground where common sense is spread, communicated and entrenched. As Gramsci (1971: 245) argues, the 'superstructures of civil society are like the trench-systems of modern warfare' where ideas become protected and potentially made hegemonic. This is possible due to ideology and an 'absence

[34]Gramsci uses the example, similarly to Marx, of the ecclesiastics, scholars, theorists, and non-ecclesiastical philosophers – who have a tendency to see themselves as autonomous, independent, 'endowed with a character of their own' (1971: 8)

[35]Gramsci (1971: 408) issues some precautions when working with the method of Marx, including the inability to ever capture the structure in any given moment, as one might hope with a photographic procedure.

of a ''consciousness of historicity'' within common sense, 'and hence of self-knowledge as the principal feature that condemns common-sense thinking to a position of dependence and subordination' (Hall, Lumley & McLennan, 1977: 50). Control over historicity, then, in the terminology of Touraine (1977), is all important, as are the obstacles to gaining this control.

The complicated working of hegemony through common sense at the private and personal level leads Williams to describe it as 'deeply saturating the consciousness of a society':

> 'Hegemony is then not only the articulate upper level of 'ideology', nor are its forms of control only those ordinarily seen as 'manipulation' or 'indoctrination'. It is a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. It is a lived system of meanings and values – constitutive and constituting – which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming. It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society, a sense of absolute because experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move, in most areas of their lives. It is, that is to say, in the strongest sense a 'culture', but a culture which has also to be seen as the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes' (Williams, 1977a: 110)

As Ives (2004a: 70-71) claims, 'Gramsci's notion of hegemony is rich in large part due to its philosophical and epistemological elements that show how seemingly private or personal aspects of daily life are politically important aspects of the operation of power'. Intellectuals, in the sense Gramsci affiliates with the modern political party, are therefore those that attempt to impact upon such epistemological bases through cultural production, ideational dissemination, and persuasion. In this sense, an effective hegemonic equilibrium works at the level of 'spontaneous' consent. The role of the organic intellectual from a subordinate group, abstractly speaking, is then interruption of such spontaneity and, or through, the articulation of an alternative set of norms. Of importance here is the power of what might be regarded as hegemonic, particularly given the strength implied by sedimentation over time through incorporation, where even, perhaps especially, language is seen as a key component of domination[36]. As Williams (1973: 8) points out, if hegemony were to rest on simple ideological manipulation, 'of a kind of overt training which might be simply ended or withdrawn, then the society would be very much easier to move and to change than in practice it has ever been or is'. Within hegemony, then, Williams (1973) sees, or at least

[36] As Gramsci (1971: 450) states, 'the whole of language is a continuous process of metaphor, and the history of semantics is an aspect of the history of culture; language is at the same time a living thing and a museum of fossils of life and civilization'.

typologises, 'highly complex' 'internal structures' of norms and practices – these he refers to as the dominant, the residual, and the emergent. The traditions and institutions of society are invested with these, serving to maintain and enforce hegemonic tendencies (Williams, 1977a). It is this complex of meaning from which, I argue, social movements *select* and work.

3.4 Selectivity, the Politics of Signification and Power in Communication

Within any society at a given time there exists a 'central system of practices, meanings and values' that can be understood as 'dominant and effective' (Williams, 1973: 8). The development of this system, as implied above, occurs through a process of incorporation[37], the modes of which are historically specific, and thus the possible forms of opposition depend on 'very precise social and political forces'. Due to the constantly changing nature of a hegemonic system, there is much 'residue', similar to what I have previously discussed as 'traces', from the past – 'experiences, meanings and values which cannot be verified or cannot be expressed in the terms of the dominant culture' but 'are nevertheless lived and practised on the basis of… some previous social formation' (Williams, 1973: 10). The content of this residual category is either at odds with the dominant and causes contradiction, or is incorporated through some change in its form. Such a change can be considered emergent, that category whose contents are continually being created and are potentially incorporated into the dominant system with some urgency, so as to retain hegemony[38]. Though this typology is plainly an abstraction, it is a useful heuristic device for understanding the impact of historicity and power on meaning-making. To better understand these processes of incorporation that maintain and legitimate hegemony, Williams proposes the notion of selectivity, or the 'selective tradition'. The selective tradition is that which, through an 'exertion of pressure', 'is passed off as 'the tradition', 'the significant past', and thus is a process of not only selecting from a 'whole area of past and present', but, necessarily, excluding or neglecting other practices and meanings, or at the very least reinterpreting or 'diluting' them into other forms translatable into the dominant culture (Williams, 1973: 9). Culture, then, 'at its most general level', 'is never a form in which people happen to be living, at some isolated moment, but a selection and organization, of past and present, necessarily providing for its own kinds of continuity' (Williams, 1981: 184). Tradition, or cultural heritage, 'always more than an inert historicized segment', is thus seen as the 'most

[37] Williams argues that this signals the presence of oppositional or alternative norms and practices, though many of these are not seen as immediately threatening so are largely ignored.

[38] Hegemony in the sense that Williams is using it here is total, or at least near-total.

evident expression of the dominant and hegemonic pressures and limits' (Williams, 1977a: 115).

Movement intellectuals, whether for a political party, a protest group, or a wider movement, are those that selectively appropriate from common sense in such a way as to guide consensus in a particular direction[39]. For those 'traditional intellectuals' that are strictly working within the confines a dominant system, this can be seen as offering a sense of 'predisposed continuity' (Williams, 1977a: 116). The role of the organic intellectual[40], arising from within a subordinate group, is to upset this continuity and to offer an alternative direction. As civil society, in both public and private domains, is understood here as a 'cultural battleground' or series of 'trenches', by implication here it must be understood as more than a site of mere hegemonic entrenchment: as an ever-changing setting of negotiation and contestation over 'cultural influence', providing the basis and location for competing sets of meaning (Mayo, 1994: 128). In similar fashion to struggles over the culturally-indebted 'lifeworld' in much new social movement theory, it is thus open to the possibility of a 'war of position': the active manipulation of the ethico-political formation to the extent that once the old hegemonic relations and practices have been 'surrounded and absorbed' it would 'make sense to take over state power' (Baldacchino, 1990: 467). Using this idea of a war of position, Gramsci argues that where the Russian revolution of 1917 was possible in a direct and forceful overthrow – a war of manoeuvre – in the Western states this can only occur, due to the development of civil society, after a long period of value restructuring within the 'organisational and industrial system' (1971: 234). Moving from an all-out 'frontal attack' to an 'unprecedented concentration of hegemony', to Gramsci (1971: 238-239), 'requires exceptional qualities of patience and inventiveness'. It is the latter, 'inventiveness', that brings us to the most active manifestation of the cultural production paradigm, one that can be seen at the heart of social movements, something some have described as 'articulation' (Hall, 1986; Grossberg, 1992; Slack, 1996).

This articulation is a process of creation and recreation, production and reproduction, in real material conditions, and is therefore always to some degree 'backward-looking', as nothing can be made without a material or need to work upon[41]. However, this is an active process,

[39]Williams regards such movements as 'formations' (1977).

[40]Again, Williams argues that this is not simply a role for those in an official capacity: the 'struggle for and against selective traditions is understandably a major part of all contemporary cultural activity' (Williams, 1977a: 117).

[41]Productive activity of any sort requires a substance to work upon: 'no society sets itself tasks for whose accomplishment the necessary and sufficient conditions do not either already exist or are not

implying 'the active work of selecting and presenting, of structuring and shaping: not merely the transmitting of an already-existing meaning, but the more active labour of making things mean' (Hall, 1982: 60). This much one can derive from frame analysis, but the theoretical detail to this process serves to show a contestation over meaning that is not open to either pure prefigured correspondence or relativistic infiltration. As Hall (1985) argues, where arguments of class or economic reductionism refer to a *necessary correspondence*, and notions of the ever-slipping signifier within some post-modern thought – and, we might add, the 'flabby relativism' of framing – refer to *necessarily no correspondence*, Gramsci's understanding, leaning on Marx, provides an active involvement within recently formed preconditions, and thus *no necessary correspondence* – an approach befitting our more complicated notion of determination. Hall provides us with numerous examples of this process in recent history, beyond what can be regarded as the cultural dimension of our everyday activity, including the articulation of such disparate elements as neo-liberal free-market principles and overt nationalism by the British government of Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s. According to Hall, this was an articulation that formed a unity of diverse elements that, despite this diversity, was able to secure domination in the arena of civil society (Hall, 2011). Elsewhere he points to the powerful articulatory role of the culture industries who…

> '…have the power constantly to rework and reshape what they represent; and, by repetition and selection, to impose and implant such definitions of ourselves as fit more easily the descriptions of the dominant or preferred culture' (Hall, 1998: 447).

The final part of the sentence, here, indicates two related points of crucial importance when discussing the processes of meaning-making within this theoretical framework, and particularly for any critique of voluntarism: first, and as made clear already through the notion of determination adopted, there is not an infinite variety of things that one could articulate as the conditions are constrained by one's socio-historical location; and second, in order to form a war of position and successfully articulate some coherent alternative, one must be able to appeal to the experience and practical consciousness of others. Only in this way is it possible to unify, through this intentional or ideological cementation of common sense, into what Gramsci would describe as an 'historic bloc' with the 'class consciousness'

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at least beginning to emerge and develop' (Gramsci, 1971: 177)). In art, Williams too points out that the process of change 'is normally one of extension of meanings, or modification of means. Beyond a certain point, a new meaning could hardly be communicated at all, or perhaps even described; the pressure would simply break up the artist's organization. The 'creative' act, of any artist, is in any case the process of making a meaning active, by communicating an organized experience to others' (1965: 49).

to disintegrate the hegemony within civil society. Again, with Thompson and varieties of new social movement theory, 'class consciousness' can be understood as the thing to be achieved, not merely uncovered and illuminated as much orthodox Marxism would have it.

Where others talk of, and some merely make mention of[42], the 'politics of signification', understanding meaning-making in this way allows a full historicisation of the 'sign'. Those within this tradition draw heavily from the 'social formalist' tradition of the Vitebsk school, notably Volosinov who argued against the dominant structuralist tradition where the sign is strictly seen as embedded within, and only understandable in relation to, a wider, internally-regulating, signification system. Meaning-making is therefore understandable through a sign's relation to other units within the system and thus the 'general internal rules of the specific system' (Williams, 1981: 61). Volosinov's (1986) response to this was to emphasise the sign as always 'multi-accentual' and not fixed to a wider internally regulating structure. There is therefore the potential for polysemy, though not infinite polysemy: 'the forms of signs are conditioned above all by the social organisation of the participants involved and also by the immediate conditions of their interaction' (1986: 21). Items are endowed with 'evaluative accentuation' that invoke or elicit an 'ideological semiotic reaction', and we can argue that cultural leadership and articulation depend on imparting 'a supraclass, eternal character to the ideological sign, to extinguish or drive the struggle between social value judgments which occurs in it, to make the sign uniaccentual' (Volosinov, 1986: 22-23). As already mentioned, there are similarities here with the work of Steinberg[43] (1996: 6), where he claims that 'the ways in which discourse legitimizes and constitutes hierarchies are the result of the meanings and uses of language that actors can bring to a situation and the non-discursive power they can exercise to establish these as the standards for dialogue'. That hegemony can be seen as a comprehensive 'saturation' (Williams, 1977a), and the clear extent of its power, then, is due to this establishment or successful equation, over time, through processes of incorporation, of a group's ideas with what is perceived as reality.

Gramsci's (1971: 445) argument that what we regard as 'objective' should only be understood as 'human objectivity', immediately corresponding to 'human subjectivity', makes sense, as Volosinov's argument is one that speaks to a struggle over what counts as 'objective' within a given era. At the micro-level of everyday practice, and in the actions of

[42]Benford and Snow (2000), for example.

[43]Indeed, Steinberg follows the ideas of Bakhtin, also of the Vitebsk School, and even rumoured to be an alias of Volosinov, a potentially necessary precaution in intellectual circles during Stalin's Soviet Union.

'intellectuals', then, we can think in terms of attempted equivalences between the subjective and the objective[44], which are, in fact, attempts at epistemological closure. The conditions within which this activity takes place, and that enables it, can then be subject to close analysis and move us beyond certain earlier aspects of social movement theory, such as within crowd behaviour theorising, where protest groups came to be seen as irrational and overly-emotional. Indeed, according to Gramsci (1971: 413), this model enables us to move beyond a 'speculative-abstract conception of 'rationality' (and therefore irrationality) in history'. Williams' (1977) conceptualisation of a 'structure of feeling' helps to bring this idea into relief, as the traces and aspects bound up within what we might refer to as rationality are not often objectively isolatable from one another in immediate analysis. Instead, this concept allows one to think in terms of 'social experiences in solution' (1977: 133), which manifests as an emotional and powerful 'court of appeal'. As Hall, Lumley and McLennan (1977: 48-56) argue, common sense in its most immediate variety is a perceptive structure where ''feeling', 'personal experience' and immediate empirical perception are dominant' (Hall, Lumley & McLennan, 1977: 48-56). Such a notion, relying on a depth of rationality that becomes 'felt' often as much as it is understood also marks a considerable advance in social movement theory, which has largely left emotion untouched and displaced (Flam & King, 2005; Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 1991; Jasper, 1998).

As above, this, strictly historical, form of articulation must take into account the experience and practical consciousness of those that are being appealed to by intellectuals. Using the useful conceptualisation of notation – useful in its replacement of an objectified product and overly structuralist and synchronic variants of the 'sign'[45] – Williams, discussing art in its cultural category, argues that 'notations have… to be interpreted in an active way, according to particular conventions', and that:

> '[t]he relationship between the making of a work of art and its reception is always active, and subject to conventions, which in themselves are forms of (changing) social organization and relationship, and this is radically different from the production and consumption of an object. It is indeed an activity and a practice, and in its accessible forms, although it may in some arts have the character of a singular object, it is still only accessible through active perception and interpretation. This makes the case of notation, in arts like drama and

[44]The totality of which, and the socio-material relations that condition such a contest, we can understand as objective.

[45]As Jones (2006: 58) argues, 'it is significant that Williams also deploys the category of notation as a means of setting limits to the Saussurean conception of the sign. Indeed Williams's theoretical 'rematerialization' within his cultural materialism moves towards an historicized semiotics'.

> literature and music, only a special case of much wider truth. What this can show us here about the practice of analysis is that we have to break from the common procedure of isolating the object and then discovering its components. On the contrary we have to discover the nature of a practice and then its conditions' (Williams, 1980: 47)

This bears similarities, it could be argued, with Hall's (1980: 54) discussion around encoding and decoding, where a lack of understanding of one's conditions of reception might lead to a 'distortion' in communication, 'arising precisely from the lack of equivalence between the two sides of the communicative exchange'.

What is encoded, within this model, is subject to the specific socio-material, historical conditions of the encoder, and how this is decoded by the receiver is subject to their own socio-material, historical conditioning. Williams account looks to ensure such understanding is always considered active – 'human experience is actively offered and actively received' (Williams, 1961: 42) – and he focuses on the proximity between practices and their audience, concentrating on their distance – described at times as relative, at others as variable (Williams, 1981b) – in relation to dominant conventions. In this sense, any 'information transmitted… has to be interpreted, described, and taken into the organization of the spectator' and thus descriptions have to be 'capable of being communicated (Williams, 1961: 46-48). Williams (1961: 48-49) continues this line of thought, explaining that 'in the process of communication, the exact degree of relation between [one's] personal meanings and the common meanings will be of vital importance… where the relation between common and personal meanings is distant, the struggle to find means of communication will obviously be long and hard'. Complete comprehension between what is encoded and what is decoded, a rarity of course, Williams would describe as 'total expression' (Williams & Orrom, 1954). Translating information and intention across group boundaries, it becomes clear, is a process full of tension and difficulty, and thus the ability to understand the experience of a particular group, or their 'structure of feeling' is essential in knowing how to reach them and enable their participation in a historic bloc[46]. This has clear repercussions for social movement analysis, as whether or not claims will be heard and met, or lead to recruitment, can be seen as down to the ability of a particular message to 'chime' with the experiences of others.

[46]This is an essential part of the role of the intellectual, to Gramsci, in garnering political power, as Hall exclaims in Jhally (2016: 341): 'Gramsci used to say, 'pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will'. What he meant is, understand how the bloody system works.'

What is regarded as popular culture can then be placed within this historical, though active, equilibrium of cultural understanding, as Hall (1998: 453) intimates:

> 'Popular culture is one of the sites where this struggle for and against a culture of the powerful is engaged: it is also the stake to be one and lost in that struggle. It is the arena of consent and resistance. It is partly where hegemony arises, and where it is secured'

The practice, then, is the ontological category from which we can better understand this process. As above, and as Williams (1980: 48) explains, then, 'we should not look for the components of a product but the conditions of a practice'. Popular culture, to some extent, as 'the symbolic language of everyday' (Johnston, 2009b: 233), can be made sense of as cultural forms or practices that resonate most effectively with social groups, and that therefore serve to maintain a certain tradition. An investigation into the wider notations that are bound up within a certain complex structure of feeling, and are actively used to secure and maintain such practices, can be seen as paramount. As Johnston and Klandermans (1995: 17) explain, '…for cultural analysis to be convincing to others it must take as its primary datum some cultural artifact [*sic*] or set of cultural products, either ideational or material, and relate it to changes in collective action'. Recent arguments outlining the study of cultural artefacts as a necessity within social movement studies do much to strengthen this position (Johnston, 2009a, 2016). Furthermore, examples of popular culture being employed are increasing in frequency within various forms of protest, largely made to resonate via conditioning from the culture industries (note for example the current use of the salute from the Hunger Games film in Thai protests (Gilbey, 2014; Jones, 2014), thus adding weight to such a claim).

This weight behind the analysis of popular cultural artefacts therefore provides some rationale for analysis around one in particular, using the theory provided here to better, and differently, comprehend its role in protest. Before moving to the empirical side of this project, however, it is worth outlining the major critiques that might come with adopting a framework around the notion 'hegemony'. The final section of this chapter will therefore look at two important and interlinked critiques of Marxism and Gramsci's work: the theses of post-Marxism and post-hegemony. Each of these, I argue, underestimates the various developments in Marxism away from those that are considered orthodox.

3.5 Post-Marxism and Post-Hegemony

Post-Marxism, to Boucher (2008: 4), is 'an effort to retrieve the legacy of Marxism for the post-modern condition' and thus I argue that it aligns with a critique of radical pluralists

already established in this work. Our dealings with determination here have registered it as a complex process with both social and material components, where neither is determined by or autonomous of the other. This presents any actor as embedded but active, and thus supplied with a range of actions available to them. Laclau and Mouffe, the most influential proponents of post-marxism, describe instead a social determination that is characterised by 'indeterminacy' and 'openness' (2014: 131). Laclau and Mouffe represent a shift from a Marxist critique of capitalism to a 'radical democracy' of 'pluralism, indeterminacy and contingency' (Ives, 2004a: 147). In their own words, hegemony 'introduces a logic of the social which is incompatible' with the categories of Marxism (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014: xxiii) and they therefore update its underlying basis to one steeped in discourse and post-structural linguistics, thus, in actual fact departing from it almost altogether. It thus becomes a discursively framed 'special type of political practice that describes the construction and deconstruction of hegemonic projects' (Howarth, 2015: 204). Relying heavily on Gramsci's notions of historic bloc and war of position, they invoke the idea of discursively formed 'nodal points' from which a plurality of groups can form 'chains of equivalence' for 'popular struggle' (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014). These points are 'privileged social signifiers' (Bertram, 1995: 96), forged into 'moments' out of previously unarticulated 'elements' or 'floating signifiers' (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014). This all takes place within a structure of elements that 'constitutes a configuration, which in certain contexts of exteriority can be signified as a totality' (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014: 92).

As with Althusser, upon whose shoulders these authors can at times be seen, we are left with an overly structural tendency toward relative values. As a result of this, and *a la* Althusser, the agentic unit is to a large degree lost, as our post-Marxists indicate:

> Whenever we use the category of 'subject' in this text, we will do so in the sense of 'subject positions' within a discursive structure. Subjects cannot, therefore, be the origin of social relations – not even in the limited sense of being endowed with powers that render an experience possible – as all 'experience' depends on precise discursive conditions of possibility (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014: 101)

Geras (1987: 69) makes a useful contribution, that relates well to this chapter more generally, where he suggests that in their comprehension, 'absolutely everything – subjects, experience, identity, struggles, movements – has discursive 'conditions of possibility', while the question as to what might be the conditions of possibility of discourse itself does not trouble the authors so much as to pause for thought'. One is left, then, with the same issue faced by much of social movement theory: the problem that these conditions of possibility

are not presented as analytical foci. There is still also the problem of the materiality of discourse, given that, without promoting relativist idealism, 'no discourse is purely thought' (Geras, 1987: 66). To resist such idealism, one must maintain some connection to a 'pre-discursive reality and an extra-theoretical objectivity' which together

> 'form the irreplaceable basis of all rational enquiry, as well as the condition of meaningful communication across and between differing viewpoints. This foundation once removed, one simply slides into a bottomless, relativist gloom, in which opposed discourses or paradigms are left with no common reference point, uselessly trading blows' (Geras, 1987:67)

Moving to the extreme of discourse may have something to do with the point of at which Laclau and Mouffe begin their analysis of the Marxist tradition.

Geras makes the point that Laclau and Mouffe largely work from the most reductive forms of Marxism, always based on some form of essentialism, making their 'forward movement' a far easier and more obvious venture. Labelling these 'economisms' or 'classisms' as simplistic, Laclau and Mouffe position themselves as those that 'insist on facing up to social complexity' (Geras, 1987: 45). Laclau and Mouffe therefore attempt to 'de-essentialise' Gramsci, and pretty much every other Marxist they encounter[47] (Geras, 1987), but their understanding of this essentialism does not match up with the understanding developed here. On the one hand they refer to Gramsci's residual economism. Such an accusation is certainly debatable, even more so if one adopts Williams' approach to the base and superstructure. On the other they decry Gramsci's view that 'there must always be a single unifying principle in every hegemonic formation, and this can only be a fundamental class' (Laclau & Mouffe (2014: 59), but overlook both the often-incorporative and concession-driven basis of hegemony along with the clear historicisation evident within Gramsci's work. Indeed, Ives (2004a: 153) foregrounds Gramsci's notion of 'subalternity', which 'suggests less of a 'predetermined' 'single unifying principle' than the need for a historical analysis that may call for one social group to take the lead (Ives, 2004a: 153). The use of only particularly reductive understandings in Marxism means that what is of value in Laclau and Mouffe's work is to some extent anticipated by understandings with a more sophisticated reading. For example, Laclau and Mouffe (2014: 120) argue that 'it is because hegemony supposes the incomplete and open character of the social, that it can take place only in a field dominated by articulatory practices'. There is some value in such a statement, so long

[47]Indeed, Geras (1987: 65) argues that '[e]very Marxism… will seem reductionist from a perspective in which the spheres of politics and ideology have become superordinate, in which, more generally, the 'symbolic' has expanded to be all-encompassing'.

as the delimited range of what is available for articulation is taken into account – something offered by the theory in this chapter.

The second term of critique, known as post-hegemony, stems from this understanding to some degree. Day (2004: 717), for example, wants to go even further and challenge the logic behind hegemony, or what he calls the '*hegemony of* hegemony': the assumption that 'meaningful social change… can only be achieved through the deployment of universalizing hierarchical forms'. Day wants to take us further along the path initiated by Laclau and Mouffe, 'far enough away from classical Marxism and the old social movements, far enough away from irradiation effects and the orientation to state power' (2004: 724) towards some understanding of 'a wide range of activist practices, which cut across all identity categories and are appearing in all parts of the world' and that 'are not oriented to allowing a particular group or movement to remake a nation-state or a world on its own image' (Day, 2005: 13). This is a fair point – though one made in a piece of work presumably looking to draw people in with its own explanations and thus one that, at least to some extent, is looking to universalise its own hierarchical forms – but does not delegitimise the historicisation of power claims. Indeed, Day's project is deeply affected – similarly to Laclau and Mouffe[48] – by his willingness to reify or abstract particular ideas in order to surpass them. He appears to consistently miss the point of 'absolute historicisation', attempting to unite Gramsci's theorising with what he regards as 'old social movements', ignoring the fact that Gramsci's abstractions are more often than not abstractions from concrete circumstances. With this reification, and de-historicisation, Day's thesis relies on abstract notions borrowed from Lacan (*ethics of desire; ethics of the real*) that end in the possibility of activists 'surprising oneself… and the structure'. Applying this to the anti-globalisation movement, Day (2004: 730) argues that 'the goal is not to create a new power around a hegemonic centre, but to challenge, disrupt and disorientate the process of global hegemony, to refuse, rather than rearticulate those forces that are tending towards the universalization of the liberal-capitalist ecumene'. While such disruption is certainly evident within many movements, the tactics, strategies and ideas of these protests will still be drawn from a particular prefigured range, and these activists will still be embedded within certain traditions and institutions. It is thus difficult to understand how these can 'take us beyond the logic of hegemony' (Day, 2004: 730), even if they do disrupt a particular hegemonic saturation.

[48]Their reification of consumer capitalism, for example (Bertram, 1996: 109).

3.6 Summary

The framework posited here – and it *is a framework*, from which further concrete analysis enables grounded abstraction – allows us to understand culture as determined *and* determining, constituted *and* constituting. Where certain social movement theories may regard it merely as a stock to be strategically drawn from, or as a resource that can be mobilized when necessary, here, it is argued, culture is far more profound. It is the very basis of those contests and conflicts, how both (or more) parties come to understand their position in relation to others. It is the conditioning of the value structures by which we understand ourselves and others, and by implication it is suggestive of how one might confront those other groups. The production paradigm at its core gives us human activity, agency we might call it, but only in relation to others and only with the raw material upon which it works firmly in the picture. Culture is historically-bound, as are the material and social relations found to be its dialectic partners. In this way the radical pluralism of later postmodern theories can be avoided, though so too can any overly mechanical or evolutionary teleology, as culture is conceptualised as both a general way of life and the practical, creative potential to change that way of life. The potential for detachment from the conditioning relations around any frame is also therefore avoided, as the voluntarism – most likely caused by the theory as a supplement to overly economistic and individualist models – makes way for 'conditioned voluntarism', or more appropriately, conditioned creativity or production. Such a shift allows the analyst to build up a greater picture of the whole, the position of the social movement (the part) within the wider set of social determinants, and how this is changing as social individuals work within and beyond them.

Gramsci's notion of hegemony takes us another step further in this task, as one can better understand the level of power between different groups and their relations to others. Hegemony, in its most historicised form, provides a view of the overall common understanding within society through how this is parcelled out between groups. Processes of meaning-making are therefore always understood in relation to these power relations, and are, it follows, part of the motor for changing them. This process can be scrutinised, giving a mode of analysis not necessarily available to other social movement theories, with Gramsci's understanding of the ideological, or intentional, directing of common sense by what might be regarded as intellectuals, leaders, or movement entrepreneurs. The resistance to this, and the maintenance of the dominant understandings, can be understood via the same mode of analysis, but, more importantly, so too can the interplay between them and the constantly changing equilibrium that is hegemony. Social movements are

available for study at this intersection, and popular cultural forms provide an effective avenue for analysis. The next chapter will therefore lay out this work's empirical basis, with the theory provided here as a backbone, centring upon one particular item of popular culture, in order to historicise and bring power back into the study of social movements and culture.

Chapter Four. Research Design

The previous chapter foregrounded an alternative, and more comprehensive, way of understanding culture within social movements. With its focus on human activity and practice, in their most historicised and contextual form, it moves beyond the excessive voluntarism and static instrumentalism of framing. It also introduces an understanding of practice that is at once constituted of material and socio-cultural determinants, where new social movement theorising over-emphasises the latter. A historical materialist approach, however, as made clear in the previous chapter, must rely upon dialogue with further empirical evidence to test its categories and concepts. To demonstrate its utility looking into social movements, the rest of this project, using the theoretical approach outlined, and in alignment with Williams' contention that it is around *practice* that one must centre cultural analysis, will work with the empirical context of Occupy London, and will focus specifically on the practice of employing the Guy Fawkes mask in protest. In doing so, as well as further highlighting the strength of such a theoretical approach, an important and, within social movement scholarship (c.f. Johnston, 2009, 2016), *sought after* empirical contribution can be made: investigating a popular cultural artefact as social movement 'primary datum'. This chapter provides a blueprint of this empirical task, including questions of sampling (both the practice and the sample), data collection (protest event analysis and interviews), data analysis, and ethical considerations. The research questions presented in Chapter One will be contextualised and justified in accordance with the methods used. A useful place to start this account is with the choice of the Guy Fawkes mask, due to its significance within social movements.

4.1 Cultural Sampling: The Guy Fawkes Mask

Masks, for a wide variety of reasons (Starr, 2006), have become a prominent tactic or innovation within social movements, but no other appears to have the resonance of the Guy Fawkes mask. Numerous other authors, though often only minimally, have discussed this particular mask in protest, and from this it is possible to get a sense of its development. Appearing first of all in the graphic novel by Alan Moore and David Lloyd, *V for Vendetta* (1988), the mask would later appear in a film adaptation with the same name (McTeigue, 2005); here it would take on the precise form that would later be seen in diverse movements around the world (Call, 2008; Kohns, 2013). Both of these characteristically dystopian pieces tell the story of a vigilante seeking revenge upon an oppressively totalitarian state (Ott, 2010; Ruiz, 2013) and draw from numerous cultural traditions,

including that of the Gunpowder Plot (Konzack, 2015), to create a culturally resonating product. This seems to have forged some availability for those within social movements, as its use in protest then emerged the year after the film adaptation, developing in the meantime as part of an anonymous online chat forum, *4Chan*, which would eventually lead to the amorphous hacktivist group Anonymous (McDonald, 2015). In this 'virtual' space, *4Chan* members used the mask as a continuing meme entitled *Epic Fail Guy* (Pittaway, 2012), with its eventual use as the face of an offshoot group looking to make some impact in other, more politically active, areas (Coleman, 2014). For example, the mask was used heavily with attacks upon the Church of Scientology in 2008 and 2009, leading to the first mass use of the mask at street events around the world (Fuchs, 2013; Ruiz, 2013). Numerous authors also cite the role of the mask in the 2011 Occupy Movement: as its 'trademark' (Kohns, 2013: 90), as an 'early symbol' (Juris, 2012: 261), or an 'iconic emblem' (Ruiz, 2013: 273). Others point to its role as the adhesive element of the Million Mask Marches, observable in many cities around the world and potentially the 'largest global protest in modern history' (Harbisher, 2016: 296), taking place each November 5th (Potter, 2015). Across this research, most of which had little direct discussion around the mask itself, rationale of using such an item was variously ascribed to both singular and collective anonymity and the capacity to directly relate to some wider symbol.

Despite this lack of direct discussion, the mask is labelled as a 'generic protest accessory' (Ott, 2010: 346) and is thus to some extent established within the general protest repertoire. Its selection as an object of investigation is thus pertinent. Furthermore, its traceable lineage through numerous cultural domains – youth culture (Ash, 2013), 'geek' culture (Konzack, 2015: 64), 'pop' culture (Kohns, 2013: 93) – and thus its allusion to a common cultural inheritance makes its adornment and selectivity a practice demonstrably historical and locatable, and therefore a useful starting point for a historical materialist perspective. The diffusion across street protest and online-based activity also adds scrutiny to an increasingly important dimension in the study of social movements (Castells, 2015; Salter, 2003; van Laer & van Aelst, 2010). With this in mind, the first empirical task of this project was to build a stronger account of, and thus to better gauge and understand, the Guy Fawkes mask's prominence, role and diffusion across social movements, beyond that of existing literature, itself only able to provide a broad, sweeping and imprecise picture. The following research question was foregrounded for this task:

1. To what extent has the practice of adopting the Guy Fawkes mask become part of the social movement and protest 'repertoire'?

Such a question – necessitating breadth of data – places obvious pressures on method, and thus a particular type of analysis was required. In line with Kohns' (2013: 90) claim that 'images of such emblematically disguised demonstrators from virtually all over the world can be found in large numbers in newspapers and on the Internet', a protest event analysis was the particular type employed.

4.2 Protest Event Analysis

Protest event analyses, depending on the work of others to track events (Ortiz, Myers, Walls & Diaz, 2005), offer the capacity to 'systematically map, analyse, and interpret the occurrence and properties of large numbers of protests' (Koopmans & Rucht, 1989: 231). The sophistication of this method has increased over time, as enhanced technology allows greater and more convenient access to large data sets, and, central to this project, it enabled me to 'systematically assess the amount and features of protests across various geographical areas… and over time' (Hutter, 2014: 335). Protest event analyses typically rely on content analyses, and very often these are conducted using news sources, such as newspapers and online news websites (Fillieule & Jimenez, 2003; Rucht & Ohlemacher, 1992). The analysis itself enables a variety of ways of working with the incoming data. The content obtained is not only open to interpretation, it is also holds the potential for conversion into statistics: frequency of word and phrases, and chronological patterns, for example (Krippendorff, 2012). This study incorporates this research flexibility, using all of these strategies. As all protest event analyses will inevitably differ to some degree, the specific process needs to be detailed in relation to the topic at hand.

With access to online newspaper archives through the University of Manchester Library[1], a content analysis was conducted using two central databases of national, regional and local news: *Access World News*[2] and *Factiva*[3], and a number of smaller online archives[4]. A keyword alert was also set up via a Gmail account, so that I would receive any news of the mask in protest so long as it was reported and so far as the news outlet was covered by Gmail News. A number of keywords were piloted, based upon my own experience of protest activity and discussions around the mask, before formal data collection began. I decided to use 'Guy Fawkes mask' after realising that the term was to yield a greater number of search results than 'Anonymous mask', '*V* mask', or '*V for Vendetta* mask'. The latter three were

[1]http://subjects.library.manchester.ac.uk/newspapers
[2]http://infoweb.newsbank.com
[3]https://global.factiva.com
[4]http://www.onlinenewspapers.com; http://www.ukpressonline.co.uk

then subsequently used to supplement the results from the former. Three rounds of data collection, using the same sources, occurred; the first between October 2014 and January 2015; the second between November 2015 and February 2016; and the final between January 2017 and March 2017. While the second and third were necessary due to a stolen laptop and a misplaced USB memory stick, respectively, performing the analysis three times led to a confidence in the data and a more apparent exhaustion of reports. After a rigorous search it was found that the first documented use of the mask in protest was in 2006. This therefore became the starting date of the protest event analysis with the end date initially as September 2014, moving to December 31st 2014 upon the second round of data collection. Anecdotally, and from the continuing Gmail alert, it became apparent that use of the mask was continuing to rise, but a cut-off date at the end of 2014 was adhered to for the sake of a contained dataset.

Where the online news sources referred only very loosely to use of the mask, and it was thus difficult to verify its actual presence at a protest event, I used the Google search engine to look specifically for that event in order to clarify what I could otherwise only speculate. The online archival data was primarily in text form, so where possible I searched for the actual website to retrieve a fuller comprehension. In the rare cases that the website had removed this content I relied solely upon the archival copy, saving it to PDF in the same folder organisation as the rest. Data handling, then, involved copying PDFs to hard-disk – then to USB memory sticks due to the size and amount of documents handled – in such a way as to enable ease of access and understanding at a later date. For this, each protest event was given its own folder, allowing multiple reports to be registered therein. These were also dated, with the date at the beginning of the file name, so as to give a chronological order to the data. Also on the file name was added the specific location of the protest. This made retrieving information from specific events and within specific time periods far easier, and thus the opportunity arose to collate monthly numbers of reports which would enable a more effective overview of the data. Dealing with the data in this way meant that I could work with the data, to a certain extent, both qualitatively – using the downloaded news reports – and quantitatively – using the statistical information garnered through the ability to convey the dates of the reports[5] chronologically. This was inputted

[5]Some of the reports spoke of events that had happened at a different time altogether. Where this occurred, the date of the report was used if it was within the same month as the event. If not, the date of the event was given in its place.

into a Microsoft Excel table, and then into a variety of graphs with polynomial trend-lines[6] to effectively convey the data. Meanwhile, the locations of protest where the mask had been observed were uploaded to Google Maps in order to create a different, more visually-effective form of data representation. The data were uploaded year by year so as to represent the diffusion and distribution between years.

As with most methods of data collection and analysis, protest event analysis has its critics. Numerous researchers, for example, argue that any use of newspaper data will likely be subject to certain forms of bias, as Ortiz et al. (2005: 398) argue, 'newspapers are not a transparent conduit of information about protest, and… important systematic selection factors and processes affect the types of data available in newspapers for social scientists'. Forms of this bias include, though are not necessarily limited to: selection bias, indirectly subsumed into research, whereby the media look only to certain events that fit their outlet's agenda (Gans, 1980; McCarthy, McPhail & Smith, 1996; Snyder & Kelly, 1977); description bias, potentially relating to that same agenda, as those privileged accounts provide description from a very specific outlook (Myers & Caniglia, 2004; Oliver & Myers, 1999; Snyder & Kelly, 1977); and researcher bias, relating to the (in)ability of the researcher to obtain the entirety of these accounts, before dealing with these other difficulties (Franzosi, 1987; Ortiz, Myers, Walls & Diaz, 2005). The clearly evident match between the first stage of my research agenda and the method outweighs these criticisms, and the method was found to hold an important level of flexibility for exactly what I was trying to achieve. This is not, however, to say the biases did not come into play: being restricted to certain archives, dealing with reports most likely biased towards larger, more violent, and higher intensity protest – and usually therefore protest that is, from the outset, gendered (Bagguley, 2010) – certainly would have had some impact on the findings. However, while we should not fall into the trap of assuming that all that is reported is all that is happening, I would argue, based on the methodology implied by the last chapter, this must in some respect be a part of the analysis, as the newspaper form is analysed as historically-placed, and always related to its socio-cultural-material location[7].

A lack of reporting of the mask may demonstrate something significant about those relations within which it is made to mean. Of course, from a protest event analysis it is

[6]The number of points added to this line was based on an understanding of the number of larger protests within a given period of time.

[7]Indeed, Chapter Five – the report from the analysis – will deal with this to some extent, not as a problem of methodology, but, due to my methodology, as a problem for analysis.

impossible to appreciate this, as we simply have no access to the necessary documentation that would help us paint such a picture. Where, the protest event analysis effectively illuminates the scale of the mask's popularity, then, a move, methodologically and analytically, toward the experience of these protesters was important to provide some understanding of why and how such a thing is possible. It is important, therefore, to use another method with a stronger qualitative dimension to approach the rich data of cultural production – and the conditions within which this takes place – described in the last chapter, and in doing so formulate a more comprehensive picture of its diffusion. Two further research questions, drawing upon an understanding of culture more attuned to its historical, power-imbued and active basis, as per Chapter Three, are therefore necessary to approach this depth:

2. Within a particular protest event what can be understood as the conditions for such a practice?
3. How can this practice be better understood with the theoretical framework outlined within Chapter Three?

In order to answer these questions, it was necessary to isolate a particular sample. Obviously the sample's proximity to, and experience of, the mask was all-important and thus its location was secured via the protest event analysis. A number of potential sample groups materialized, as it was possible to observe what seemed to be important moments in the mask's career. Three in particular emerged as contenders[8]: the protests against the Church of Scientology in 2008, which seemed to be the first large-scale use of the mask; the Occupy Movement, which appeared as the point at which the mask reached critical mass; and the Million Mask Marches, which were by far the largest and most widespread use of the mask across the dataset. (While the protest event analysis demonstrated the crucial role of Anonymous, the difficulty in procuring correspondence with its members made it too difficult a group with which to liaise.) Given the proximity, in spatial and temporal terms, of the Occupy Movement to the Million Mask Marches, the former was chosen. Furthermore, the respective protest event in London – Occupy London and the London Million Mask Marches – for each of these movements was one of the largest and most reported upon. The broader rationale for this sample is thus clear. Additionally, the geographical proximity of such a sample made fieldwork more practical than other options.

[8]See Figure 1 in Chapter Five for a visualisation of this.

4.3 The Occupy Movement: A Sketch of Occupy London

The Occupy Movement emerged in September 2011, first of all on Wall Street, New York, before diffusing as an umbrella movement into hundreds of cities around the world (Smaligo, 2014). The movement came about off the back of the Arab spring uprisings in the Middle East, and the Indignados movement, centred around the Puerta del Sol square in Madrid, Spain (Ibrahim, 2015), though some researchers argue that its development came as part of a longer term preoccupation with its particular claims, and thus reflected aspects of the Zapatistas (Nail, 2013) and the alter-globalisation movement (Halvorsen, 2012). Many regard an article in the Canadian anarchist magazine, *Adbusters*, as the 'call to arms' of the Occupy Movement, as a July piece invited or instructed protesters to gather and camp at Wall Street in mid-September[9]. As a tactic, the recent adoption of occupying public spaces had enjoyed some success, and thus it became the basis of what was to become a wide-reaching set of protests with a degree of longevity, many lasting well into 2012. Such a movement, due to this longevity, provides for those within it a greater opportunity to produce, reproduce, enforce and reinforce a set of cultural understandings, always determined to an extent by prior experience, that can be, and were, subjected to interrogation in analysis. It also represented a useful opportunity to better understand the role of power and conflict in how certain understandings came to dominate, while others perhaps remained at the fringes of the movement. As Fletcher (2014: 83) argues, however, 'the limits, borders and boundaries of its affiliation are fairly fluid and can include not only those captured under the narrative of 'Occupy' explicitly, but also those linked through solidarities with the 'reclaim', 'decolonise'… and '(un)Occupy'… movements' (Fletcher, 2014: 83).

Occupy London, split between its camp at St Paul's Cathedral (formed on the 15th October 2011, evicted on 27th February 2012) and another at Finsbury Square (formed on the 15th October, evicted on the 14th June 2012) (Halvorsen, 2012), was one such event where these different groups emerged or came into contact, with Anonymous UK – a group claiming to be part of the online hacktivist group Anonymous – forming one consistent part of its population. During the early stages of the occupation a precursor to what would later become the Million Mask March also took place. As a sample, this, indeed, demonstrates to a greater degree the coming into contact of relatively different ideas, particularly around the mask, and this is something that emerged with some vigour throughout the analysis, as is

[9] http://www.adbusters.org/occupywallstreet/

demonstrated in Chapters Six and Seven. Occupy London Stock Exchange (the site at St Paul's) became a protest camp of 'do it yourself' politics, in active response to the perception of politics as shut off from, and neglectful of, 'the 99%' (Bennett, 2012). Some key elements of this site, and others like it, were a commitment to political 'horizontalism', consensus decision-making, large-scale utilisation of social media and the use of the Guy Fawkes mask along with other movement-wide slogans (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Gerbaudo & Trere, 2015; Nail, 2013). Not only the apparent prevalence in the mask, then, but also the adoption of 'new' forms of communication and cultural production made the Occupy London context appropriate for better understanding the mask and 'culture' more generally in social movements. The method by which data was generated with these individuals had to be one that explores 'the construction and negotiation of meanings in their natural setting' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: 29), and thus interviews were deemed commensurate and appropriate for the study.

4.4 Semi-Structured Interviews: Working with the Actual Life Process

As interviews provide, phenomenologically-speaking, access to the 'life-world' – to the 'lived daily world from the subjects' own perspectives' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 27), they correspond with the historical materialist methodology here, as indicated by this passage in Marx and Engel's *The German Ideology* in which he discusses his notion of *positive science*, beyond that which is used for 'neatly trimming the epochs of history':

> 'our difficulties begin only when we set about the observation and the arrangement – the real depiction – of our historical material… the removal of these difficulties is governed by premises which… only the study of the *actual life-process and the activity of individuals* of each epoch will make evident' (1977: 48, my italics)

This 'actual life-process' that Marx foregrounds we can understand as the phenomenological practical consciousness, actively constituted through experience and the coming into contact and working through, within real material conditions, ideologically guided traces of common sense. Interviews, effectively undertaken, provide a way to discuss this experience, through a selective account, in a one-to-one setting.

4.4.1 Making Contact

The main criterion by which the participants for the study were selected was that, as above, they had attended Occupy London in the capacity of protester. In order to get a greater sense of the active meaning around the mask there were no limits placed on time attended,

though all participants, it turned out, spent at least a couple of days there, with some staying for weeks. In initial contact with prospective participants the research topic was made clear and was framed as trying to build up a picture of their experiences within protest and how this might impact on how they understand the mask. In total, twenty participants were interviewed over the space of six months (November 2015 to April 2016). Four of these were female, sixteen were male. While this is perhaps not representative of Occupy as a whole, sampling was largely defined by convenience and availability, thus making parity between sexes difficult[10]. All were over eighteen years old, with ages ranging between late teens to mid-60s. The participants came from all walks of life, demonstrating the diversity from which similar claims emerged within Occupy. Initial contact was made through already-existing connections at Occupy London, though these weren't rooted particularly strongly within the movement and this only led to four interviews in total. Through attendance at an Occupy General Assembly in March 2016 six more members accepted the offer to be interviewed. At the event numerous co-attendees, after being told the purpose of the research, were asked to participate, with their email addresses and/or phone numbers taken for later contact. Two other interviewees were obtained through messaging mailing lists, and emailed me back directly.

The remaining interviewees were reached through one particular protester whom I had contacted after reading an article of his on a national newspaper website. As a potential 'gatekeeper', he held 'authority or control over the access to one or more other individuals', and thus the 'power to give or deny access to the population of interest' (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015: 202). This became clear after contact was made by email and by telephone, where he offered that we 'swap labour'. By this he meant that for some of my time helping him organise the material he had collected from past protests, he would let me interview him and would pass on my details and my request to those he thought would be willing to participate. The social notations and their subsequent set expectations of the particular group at this point were becoming clear, in what appeared as a very 'horizontalist' transaction. After helping him for one afternoon, conversing/interviewing him as we worked, he sent a message to other protesters from Occupy London, and the remaining interviewees, but one, were gathered. The final addition, for his insights away from protest, was an employee of a South London graphic novel store. This was undertaken in order to

[10]It is accepted that this may have some impact on the kind of notations drawn upon, given differences in practical uses of social convention (Einwohner, Hollander & Olson, 2000). Whether this number is representative of the numbers of each sex within Occupy is very difficult to determine.

better understand the 'common inheritance' around the mask, and to interrogate the form's history within a different societal group. After asking at the store if anyone had a particular interest in the mask, I was told to leave my number for a member of staff not currently working, and that he would get in touch with me if he was willing to be interviewed. After text messaging me a number of days later, we arranged an interview at a later date.

4.4.2 Relationship with Interviewees

My relationship with the interviewees was mixed. Two already existing contacts were known well: one as a former colleague and another as a friend from my undergraduate degree at a University in London. As my two initial interviews, these worked well as what might be considered pilot interviews – testing the 'interview design with a small number of participants' (Seidman, 2013: 42) – where the rapport, necessary for the quality of the research process (Klenke, 2016: 126) was already in place, and the interviewees seemed willing to talk freely about their experiences. I recognised that there would be a necessity to build rapport, empathy and trust in the remaining interviews, and thus more general questions, identifying the tone, technical vocabulary, and expressive techniques, were asked at the beginning of each interview (O'Connor & McDermott, 1996), as an attempt to show appreciation and respect to the respondent in the hope that they would reciprocate (Keegan, 2009). In this way, aside from the benefits accrued from interviewee comfort, some understanding of the forms by which cultural (re)production occurs can be registered, as well as the apparent power relations in the exchange. The latter are an inevitable part of interaction and are thus potentially intensified or concentrated within the interview setting (Edwards & Holland, 2013). For example, something that I keenly felt through most of the interviews, particularly where rapport seemed harder to come by, was the sense of being 'done a favour' by the interviewees, or, as Limerick, Burgess-Limerick and Grace (1996) describe it, as being the recipient of a 'gift'. In the situations in which I already knew the interviewees, and most particularly in the interviewee that was part of a labour exchange, this was not apparent. Some, often relying on Goffman's impression management thesis (Atkinson, Delamont & Coffey, 2003; Lee & Roth, 2004), accentuate the importance of the interviewer's self-presentation to communicate or express oneself in a way that enables rapport, trust and empathy. When in contact with the interviewees and within the interviews themselves, I believe to have presented myself as appreciative, inquisitive and interested. In terms of my own position, I described myself as someone that has attended many protests, having been interested in but never really fully committed to any particular

movement. With most participants, this seemed to put them on a forward-footing, with more power over someone willing to learn from their experience.

4.4.3 Interview Organisation

All participants were given the choice of date, time and venue, with the option made available of telephone or Skype interview, in order to suit their convenience. Seven chose to meet in person, while thirteen decided that a telephone or Skype interview would be preferable. While telephone interviews have traditionally been seen, predominantly because of their isolation of a single data-form, as 'second best' behind face-to-face interviews, they have their advantages in terms of convenience, perceived privacy, a shift in issues of self-presentation and the ability to obtain data from a source that might not have been otherwise available (Holt, 2010; Stephens, 2007). Interviews via webchat applications and software (in my case, Skype) add the face-to-face element of the interview back in, while retaining some of those benefits of a telephone interview (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014; Hanna, 2012). However, most that opted for Skype in this study requested that it be used in audio-form only, with some interviews switching between the two due to difficulties with connection. The experience of conducting the few face-to-face interviews on Skype seemed more difficult, as while it is face-to-face, the range of where you can look is limited to the screen and to the face, potentially leading to some awkwardness in comparison to sitting physically with the interviewee, where one retains the ability to look elsewhere for some of the time. This is all the more important with previously unacquainted interviewers and interviewees, and may impact on the ability to build rapport. Participants requesting an interview in-person were met either at their homes or at a local coffee shop[11]. The interviews lasted between fifty minutes and four hours, but tended to be around an hour long. This I deemed as long enough to provide the necessary richness of data, but not too long as to inconvenience respondents with already busy schedules.

Each interview, as above, began with informal conversation in order to ensure the participant was at ease. They were each asked whether they minded having the conversation recorded, to which they all responded that they did not. Interviews were semi-structured and, as such, both the order and the wording of questions could be changed in adaptation with the ever-changing conversation and in line with the attitude and ideas of the respondent (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). To an extent, then, the semi-structured interview allows interviewees to 'speak 'in their own words'' (Packer, 2011: 43). An interview guide

[11]For the latter, participants were bought a drink of their choice out of appreciation for their time.

was utilised, but, as already intimated, any digression was embraced, allowing the participant to wander freely through their experience. Where possible, eye contact was made and maintained to demonstrate attentiveness, though notes were made throughout the interviews. This enabled time to focus on the dual tasks of listening while also thinking of subsequent probing questions that would draw out greater richness in detail (Turner, 2010). This was guided to an extent, bringing the conversation back round to what I implicitly understood as a cultural understanding within protest. At times, I would offer up my own experience as a stimulus for the interviewee to do the same. In this way, the discussions became conversational to an extent, and the conventional situation of the interview with some of the pressures or expectations that go with it, were loosened somewhat, allowing for further data generation. Some participants, however, were slightly more difficult to pull into a conversation style, and thus the interview guide was a useful tool upon which to rely. Where necessary, respondents were asked to expand or elaborate on their answers or through their experience for the same purpose.

4.4.4 Transcription and Data Analysis

After the data had been obtained from the interviews it was transcribed verbatim using the online website 'Otranscribe[12]', which ensures that any content transcribed does not leave the computer on which it is written, and thus maintains the security of the data set. At this stage, pseudonyms were added and all place names changed to prioritise anonymity. Notes were taken whilst transcription occurred to mark out any initial themes that emerged. This stage formed part of my immersion in the data, and once all transcripts were created I listened back to each interview making further notes. Finalised transcripts were standardised with line numbers and precise formatting to enable easier analysis. Formal data analysis then consisted of reading and re-reading transcripts, getting a feel for the substance provided, and making notes of particular themes – that is, making notes of 'something important about the data in relation to the research question' or of 'some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set' (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 82). A form of thematic analysis therefore took place, but one that was at each stage iterative, always coming back to the data set as a whole, and the fluctuations within it as analysis proceeded. Those themes were taken and linked to other themes in the data set, foregrounding wider themes and linking with social-cultural notations. Of course, my own preconceived ideas of what those notations were had an impact upon how these were filtered, something that I

[12] http://otranscribe.com/

reflected upon as analysis continued, but this can be said for all qualitative research, and I feel does not depreciate the utility of my findings. Once reflected upon, I attempted to draw upon alternative interpretations of these themes, in order to problematize the findings further.

4.4.5 Methodological Considerations

Despite what seems to be a perfect match between a method and its quarry, there are potential problems to recognise when using interviews, not least that they are often regarded as the 'taken for granted' fall-back method for qualitative research (Mason, 2002; Myers & Newman, 2007: 3). Methodologically, there has been a shift in thinking, 'characteristic of poststructuralist, postmodernist, constructionist, and ethnomethodological inquiry', as Gubrium and Holstein (2011: 141) argue, '[r]espondents are not so much repositories of knowledge – treasures of information awaiting excavation – as they are constructors of knowledge in association with interviewers'. This is most agreeable for its emphasis on production, though away from any radical pluralism and 'endless interpretation' implied by those aforementioned intellectual movements (see, for example, Scheurich, 1995: 240). The situational production of ideas, inflected by experience, can be considered an everyday occurrence – and the interview setting may well be an opportunity for greater intensity in this – but, as with Williams above, there remains a limited range, beyond which the interviewee could not create new ideas, or new knowledge. Experience, in this sense, is delimiting – a point that, for reasons of researcher interest, requires some unpacking.

As discussed in the previous chapter, meaning-making is an epistemological contest for closure over certain understandings, and thus knowledge, to Gramsci, is 'based in the concrete rather than the abstract, and is developed in a social context' (Jubas, 2010: 226). In research, then, we are faced with the dilemma that we, ourselves, as researchers, are implicated in these attempts to equate our own understanding with reality. Furthermore, in analysing the content of that abstract category, common sense, how can I remove myself from that very 'court of appeal', in order to critique it? Of course, my own internalisation of that common sense is rendered available only through my practical experience of it, and thus any action, in a research capacity or otherwise, will not be the same as that of others. In this way, however, any research that I conduct will draw from the same 'common inheritance' as other members of my society, though in ways particular to my own creative and experientially contested trajectory within it. It is thus a question of effectively drawing

out, from concrete analysis, those elements of common sense and their ideological and material base, as Gramsci suggests:

> '[a] philosophy of praxis [historical materialism] cannot but present itself at the outset in a polemical and critical guise, as superseding the existing mode of thinking and existing concrete thought (the existing cultural world). First of all, therefore, it must be a criticism of 'common sense', basing itself initially, however, on common sense in order to demonstrate that 'everyone' is a philosopher and that it is not a question of introducing from scratch a scientific form of thought into everyone's already existing activity' (Gramsci, 1971: 330-331)

To the extent that such activity can be historically placed, there is, in this sense, a unity between theory and practice, as it becomes possible to trace theory as delimited by practical experience.

Such a view, a 'materialist conception of history', sees the capacities of a researcher as:

> '…belonging to a subject socially constituted as a knowing subject, trying to grasp, as the object of its knowledge, the world of which it is a part. This "uprighting" [13] deconstructs the social privileging of intellectual labor by exposing the social particularity of the intellectual standpoint. In so decentering the knowing subject of intellectual labor, a materialist conception of history demands of a historical-materialist *Wissenschaft*[14] an epistemological modesty, itself manifested as the demand for a modest determination of the applicability of the tools of intellectual labor: concepts' (Fracchia, 1999: 190)

This modesty is clear in parts of Marx's work, as analysis is treated as never final and as an ongoing 'epistemologically necessary process of using the results of historical analyses to correct or update the purely conceptual analysis' (Fracchia, 1991: 178). This also, then, tells us something about any use of abstraction when the concrete has been prioritised. There is, of course, the concern that the methods selected, particularly the interviews, will be 'flooded'[15] with the concepts and categories of social science (Potter & Hepburn, 2012), and thus the 'dangers of 'forcing data' to fit preconceived hypotheses' (Roulston, 2014: 306). Indeed, to Marx, these abstractions, or 'universal statements', are only valuable in their function as 'guiding threads' to orientate concrete, empirical research; other than this

[13]A hint at Marx's complicated inversion or 'uprighting' of Hegel's theory, from historical idealism to historical materialism.

[14]Meaning pursuit of knowledge, Fracchia deliberately uses the German term *Wissenschaft* because of Marx's inevitable use of it, and its all-too-easy translation into science, which directs its meaning in a certain ideological direction.

[15]Given that use of the concepts will more likely be through direction of the interview, as opposed to the explicit language used, *saturated* is perhaps a more appropriate word here.

''viewed apart from the study of real history,' these statements are only 'abstractions which have in themselves no value whatsoever' (Marx in Fracchia, 1991: 164). The preceding chapter demonstrated the pitfalls of hypostatising abstract categories, such as base and superstructure. Marx refers to such 'guiding' abstractions as 'chaotic conceptions ', and we would be mistaken to simply ''read off' concepts which were designed to operate at a higher level of abstraction as if they automatically produced the same theoretical effects when translated to another, more concrete, 'lower' level of operation' (Hall, 1986: 7). Certainly, Marx's investigative method of 'descent', seen throughout his work, involves moving from chaotic conceptions to the concrete in practice – 'the production of the concrete in thought' (Marx, 2005: 101) – in order to build up a more complex picture with the diverse set of 'simple determinations ' that make up what can be variously described as the rich totality (Marx, 2005), the ensemble of social relations (Marx & Engels, 1976), or the 'unity of the diverse' (Marx, 1973: 103). We are thus manoeuvring all the time between 'trans-historical generalisations' (Fine & Saad-Filho, 2004: 5) and lower levels of operation, in what might be understood as a hermeneutic cycle, constantly rebuilding and reconceptualising the whole.

This methodological process of refining concepts to suit empirical analysis is identifiable here in this project's endeavour to work in and through the levels of both theoretical, abstracted conceptualisation *and* empirical, concrete analysis. The 'results' and 'conclusions' of this analysis are always and only provisional: the platform for further understanding, for further testing of abstract devices and categories. The role, then, of the researcher is not to elaborate *dogmatic truths*, but to present *modest reflections* upon one's findings in the knowledge that these should be reworked through further analysis, by oneself or others with alternative experience within common inheritance. Indeed, in relation to one's own experience, Gramsci (1971: 324) argues that '[t]he starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical forces to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory'. As a working through of one's own relation to the 'object' of study[16] it is possible, through positioning or 'reflexivity'[17], to give an account of the origin of those knowledge claims or attempts at epistemological closure[18]. In addition to this, a common concern with interviews revolves around whether the internal situation of the interview is able to convey anything about the external world (Silverman, 1985). This seems fruitless here, and even a focus on

[16]though not ignoring, of course, the extent to which this object becomes in part constituted by the study itself, which is, after all, active human practice

[17]Though for a discussion on the complexity of this term, see Maton (2003)

[18]As much as one might attempt to remain open about and with that closure.

utterances or performance still relies heavily on socio-cultural notations that form the 'court of appeal' by which those categories are judged. These accounts given by interviewees, in relation to the interviewer, will always be selective, in the sense that all stories, all cultural production, will be appropriated based on *intention* (Williams, 1961). Also relevant here, as with the protest event analysis, are issues of bias. As Brewerton and Milward (2001: 74) claim, the 'highly reactive environment' means that there is a probability of bias on both sides of the interview dialogue. Interviews, they continue, 'can be notoriously unreliable, particularly when the research wishes to draw comparisons between data sets' (p74). The inclinations and predispositions of any interviewer – derived of course from their experience – inevitably pose a challenge when 'decoding' the information from the interview, though as much as possible it should be emphasised that what is shared, what makes possible the necessary interaction in an interview, is inherently cultural and should also thus be material for analysis. As this was not the central task, however, a level of reflexivity, questioning my own assumptions and position in relation to the interviewee and their understanding, was adopted and maintained throughout the interview and analysis process. It must be stated, however, that my own views, in the first place, were a major component in generating this research, and appeared quite close to a number of the respondents, and not too far from any of them.

As above, with the 'flooding' of social science categories (Potter & Hepburn, 2012), there is also the problem of the bias introduced into the interview itself – the direction taken and questions posed. However, the interview form adopted here was semi-structured in order to work with an 'incomplete script' and to leave room for improvisation (Myers & Newman, 2007: 4). In this way, for the most part at least, the 'dominant voice' was that of the respondent (Corbetta, 2013: 266), meaning that while there was undoubtedly guidance, necessarily so, there was the opportunity available, and often taken, for the respondent to lead the exchange. Furthermore, questions asked were as often as possible related to 'situational' and experiential information from the life of the respondent, as opposed to abstract questions (Mason, 2002: 64). This led to what Benney and Hughes (1984) would describe as greater equality, in that the information generated was more likely to be voluntarily given, but perhaps in place of comparability, as this led to more diverse accounts. I would argue, however, that the topic for discussion inevitably curtailed any radical diversity in the accounts of the respondents.

4.4.6 Ethical Considerations

In accordance with the British Sociological Association's Statement of Ethical Practice (2002[19]), this study meets all appropriate ethical standards and assures the safeguarding of all those involved in the study. I acknowledge my responsibility for the data and the ways in which it is used, an acknowledgement shared with the research participants within the Information Sheet emailed to them prior to acceptance and inclusion within the study. Protecting the social and psychological well-being and the rights of the participant, as well as building trust and integrity throughout the research relationship, requires a full explanation, in accessible language, of the research and its purpose. Including those that will benefit from the study, as well as who is involved, the Information Sheet provided such an explanation. It also made participants aware of their right to withdraw at any time and for any reason, their anonymity as far as anonymity is possible and the confidentiality of their information and of their inclusion. In any correspondence or published material, participants were told that they would be given a pseudonym to protect their identity, and place names would be anonymised in the same manner to ensure their identity could not be established. Participants were told that their data and information would be kept secure in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998[20]): in hard copy form in a locked filing cabinet, whose key I alone possess; and on a password-protected computer, whose password I alone know. All information in data collection/generation was scrutinised for whether or not it was sensitive to the extent that it should not be kept and participants were made aware that a court of law, by subpoena, has the authority to overturn this confidentiality agreement.

Within the interview itself, life experiences were discussed in a manner that some interviewees may have found distressing. They were thus made aware, beforehand, within the Information Sheet, that they could stop the interview at any time or even withdraw fully from the study. Interviewees were made aware of sources of support should they feel any form of distress within the interviews. As all participants were over eighteen and demonstrated no clear vulnerabilities, no further action was needed in this regard. The right to refuse recording of any kind was also conveyed within the Information Sheet. Interviewees were not offered the chance to view or revisit transcripts, but were instead offered feedback on the analysis and conclusions of the interviews. How their data would likely be utilised, as part of a doctoral thesis and potentially within publications, was made

[19]https://www.britsoc.co.uk/equality-diversity/statement-of-ethical-practice/
[20]https://www.gov.uk/data-protection/the-data-protection-act

clear within the Information Sheet, though if publication required that any other researcher would use their data, they would first be consulted.

Participants were asked to fill in a Consent Form before the interview, after all of the above had been made available in a clear and concise way in the Information Sheet, in order to protect myself and the University of Manchester from any ethical complaints. These were collected from those interviewed in-person, whereas those interviewed by Skype or by telephone were sent an electronic consent form to sign and send back.

4.6 Summary

While previous chapters provide a detailed discussion of culture within social movement theory and how this can be significantly developed through a historical materialist approach to culture, this chapter has outlined the empirical side of this project required to demonstrate the efficacy of such an approach. The rest of this thesis will work with the substantive, empirical and concrete detail obtained from the methods outlined here, in accordance with the theoretical backdrop described, and pertaining to these three research questions:

1. *To what extent has the practice of adopting the Guy Fawkes mask become part of the social movement and protest 'repertoire'?*
2. *Within a particular protest event – Occupy London – what can be understood as the conditions for such a practice?*
3. *How can this practice be better understood with the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Three?*

The practice of adorning the Guy Fawkes mask first of all required a better understanding of the contexts within which it is used. In this way, it was possible to attempt an understanding of what socio-cultural and material factors impact upon its perceived availability. The protest event analysis has been shown here to be an appropriate method with which to demonstrate this diffusion. Given the already existing accounts of the mask, each of which marks it as a notable cultural occurrence, this empirical basis is a significant contribution in itself. The following chapter, Chapter Five, reports on the data generated through this protest event analysis, specifically with my first research question in mind. Looking into the general diffusion and the career of the mask as a cultural artefact, Chapter Five therefore paves the way for a more detailed discussion in Chapters Six and Seven, which use the interview data to investigate the perceived and perceptible conditions for the practice within Occupy London. These chapters, particularly Chapter Seven, also use the accounts of the interviewees to interrogate, through the more developed sense of culture, the

understandings and perceptions of the mask and its role in protest. Furthermore, in accordance with Gramsci's theory of hegemony, Chapter Seven looks to the cultural contestation around the mask's meaning.

Chapter Five. Protest Event Analysis and the Guy Fawkes Mask

In the previous chapter I justified the selection of the Guy Fawkes mask on the basis of previous social movement scholarship, where it is deemed at least a 'generic protest accessory' (Ott, 2010: 346), or, more generously, as a 'trademark' (Kohns, 2013: 90), an 'early symbol' (Juris, 2012: 261), or an 'iconic emblem' (Ruiz, 2013: 273) of certain movements. The extent of this employment of such a cultural product or artefact – designating it a *practice* in its processual form – is the subject of this chapter, in order to better understand its availability within protest repertoires. This chapter therefore looks to answer the first research question – to what extent has the practice of adopting the Guy Fawkes mask become part of the social movement and protest 'repertoire'? – whilst also keeping the other research questions, regarding how these processes can be understood, in mind. A protest event analysis using media reports conveys the extent of the mask's diffusion, and provides a chronology or *career* of the mask, plotting its trajectory over time and in relation to broader events that make up the environment within which it is made available for protesters. This is outlined in detail below. Following this, a small number of specific examples, where employment of the mask is contested and seemingly more complicated than might otherwise seem to be the case, will be presented. These examples indicate, by demonstrating the contested, contextual and complicated nature of diffusion, the need for more specific analysis of cultural production to supplement the broader picture painted here. To get an initial sense of the data, and the development of the mask's popularity, Figure 1 provides an accumulative account. Such a sharp increase in popularity warrants investigation, particularly regarding the mask's origins, trajectory of diffusion, and how these are dependent upon processes of active meaning-making. It is therefore to the career of the mask that I shall first turn.

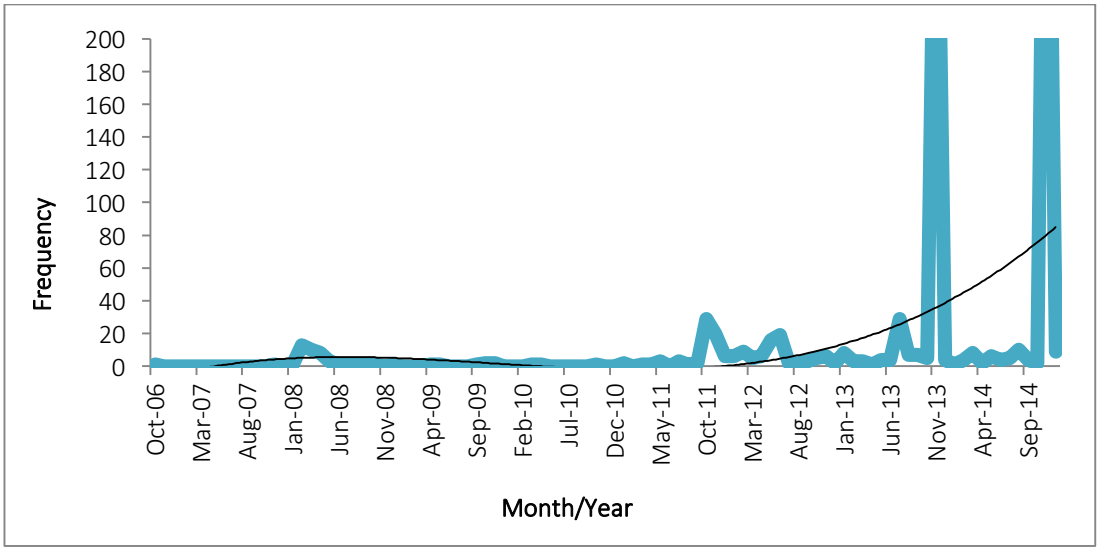

Figure 1. Total media reports of the mask over time with polynomial trend-line marking shift(s) in frequency.

5.1 The Career of a Cultural Artefact

5.1.1 'Origins'

The mask is most consistently referred to in the media reports as the 'Guy Fawkes' mask[1], with the story of Guy Fawkes often accompanying article discussion. Fawkes' story, as the most notorious protagonist of the 1605 Gunpowder Plot, holds remarkable significance within British history, as evidenced by annual celebrations and retellings that mark its anniversary, along with rituals and practices that attempt to depict the event (Sharpe, 2005). These practices draw on the narrative of a Catholic dissenter attempting to 'blow up' the British Houses of Parliament in order to murder protestant King James I (Fraser, 1996; Nicholls, 1991), something that the media reports argue has been appropriated as an expression of resistance and protest (Jones, 2011; Nickelsburg, 2013; O'Brien, 2011). As is explored in more depth later, numerous reports comment on the irony of borrowing from a narrative of a 'Catholic supremacist' in protests pushing for more 'egalitarian' attitudes (Merica, 2011; Morris, 2013). While there is undeniably some truth in this, we can also argue that the notations of this story, that have for many people been a building block of common sense throughout their lives, are open to re-appropriation or re-articulation in different ideological directions. It is also possible to presume that the story of Guy Fawkes has, each year, been reproduced through different ideological contexts as society around it has developed, and, being entangled in a dialectic relationship the wider context, is

[1]It could, of course, be argued that this was an inevitable product of the search words used for the protest event analysis; however, other terms were also used with far fewer results. It is also the case that even using terms such as 'Anonymous mask', the articles would most likely still refer to Guy Fawkes, which would also show up when using the search-term 'Guy Fawkes mask'.

therefore very open to such processes. The media's propensity to also draw upon the *V for Vendetta* story is a powerful example of this re-articulation, with the authors of the original graphic novel, Alan Moore and David Lloyd (1988), and the director of the film adaptation (McTeigue, 2005), claiming that this is was an intentional move (Halleck, 2013; Moore, 1988), with the mask purposefully resembling a famous drawing of Guy Fawkes (Reich, 2015).

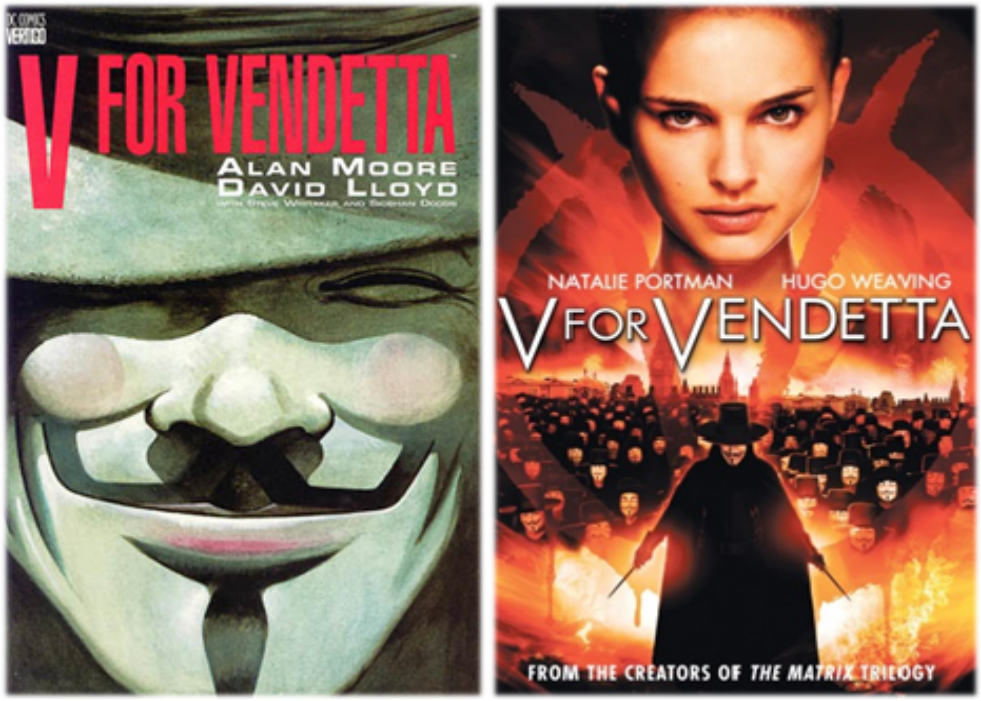

Image 1 (left). *V for Vendetta* graphic novel cover, 1988[2]
Image 2 (right). *V for Vendetta* film adaptation, 2005[3]

It is within the graphic novel that the mask, in its subsequently consistent form, first makes an appearance, which explains the rare mention of it in the media as the '*V for Vendetta* mask' or the 'V-mask' (Ashcraft, 2012; Waites, 2011). Both formats of the story take place in a future, dystopian London, where the protagonist, *V*, appears as a product of the authoritarian regime's scientific experiments on the 'undesirable' populace, and, always wearing the mask, enacts a vendetta against those responsible for his and others' horrific treatment (Duncan & Smith, 2009; McAllister, Gordon & Jancovich, 2006). The cultural, if not entirely 'accurate'[4], narrative of Guy Fawkes is endorsed within the fiction throughout, for example, the destruction of the Houses of Parliament in both formats, as well as the

[2]Image taken from www.hollywoodreporter.com
[3]Image taken form www.rottentomatoes.com
[4]The notion of 'accuracy' is an interesting one that brings analysis back to discussions of what Williams (1977) describes as the 'selective tradition' as certain articulations are guided with some level of intentionality.

obvious similarities between Guy Fawkes' face and the style of the mask. This adoption of a cultural narrative is clearly observed within many newspaper reports that refer explicitly to both stories, something that perhaps strengthens the synthesis or articulation (see for example, Corfield, 2014; Kelley, 2013; Lovett, 2011; Waites, 2011). Demonstrating the importance of the contextual material and social relations for the ideological articulation of certain common sense elements, both formats emerged at times of deepening political conservatism: the former at the height of Margaret Thatcher's UK government (Carratero-Gonzalez, 2011; Moreira, 2007)[5], the latter during George W. Bush's post-9/11, Republican US presidency (Keller, 2008). Indeed, Ott (2010: 40) argues that popular culture such as the *V for Vendetta* story 'enlists and mobilizes viewers at a visceral level to reject political apathy and to enact a democratic politics of resistance and revolt against any state that would seek to silence dissent'. The dependence upon these narratives of those using the mask in protest is demonstrated in *Figure 1* where the first reported use is in 2006, the year after the film adaptation of *V for Vendetta*. The peaks and troughs demonstrated in this line graph align well with what is documented as a common feature of social movements, as indicated by the concept of protest cycles[6] (Kitschelt, 1986; Minkoff, 1997; Tarrow, 1993). However, using the media reports and the accounts of others, one can also investigate the concrete occurrences in both peak and trough moments, to try to better understand the mask's diffusion as a cultural artefact.

5.1.2 Anonymous and *Project Chanology*

In apparent isolation, the first reported use of the Guy Fawkes mask involved a lawmaker in Taipei, Taiwan, protesting against a legislature committee's potential arms procurement deal. After entering the committee's meeting room wearing the mask, the lawmaker used tear-gas to put a swift halt to discussions (Chung, 2006). From here, there are no reported sightings of the mask and little to tell us of the influence this may have in appealing to others. However, the mask *does* appear elsewhere. According to Phillips (2015), some close variant of the mask becomes noticeable on the internet, specifically on the cult image-board website, *4chan*. In 2006, this site hosted a comic web-series entitled *Epic Fail Guy*, with the mask serving as the face of a stick figure failing at everything it attempts to do (Russon, 2014; see Image 4). The setup of *4chan*'s web location, in some instances beyond indexed

[5]Though Moore and Lloyd are purported to have said that the environment and atmosphere were based on 1930s Nazi Germany (Lamont, 2011)

[6]Protest cycles: the notion, steeped in ideas drawn from political opportunity structure theorising, that certain movements shape and raise the likelihood of other movements, and where alterations in political conditions create new opportunities for protest (Tarrow, 1994).

search engines, meant that all contributions were largely anonymous. In this anonymous cyber-space, trolling activity of individuals or groups gradually came to be seen as more than just a source of 'lulz', and as a source of power[7] (Pittaway, 2012). At some point, the mask and this anonymity became 'articulated' together, or symbolically fused, giving birth to the hacktivist group, Anonymous, the name used by 'various groups of hackers, technologists, activists, human rights advocates, and geeks', employed as 'a banner for collective actions online and in the real world that have ranged from fearsome but trivial pranks to technological support for Arab revolutionaries' (Coleman, 2012: 83).

Image 3 (left). Taiwan lawmaker in protest against arms policy, October 2006[8]
Image 4 (right). Epic Fail Guy comic strip, described as 'unsavory' by Coleman (2014)[9]

Evidence of Anonymous as a banner for, or a catalyst of, 'real world' collective action can be observed as the first real spike of action from February 2008 onwards, as they called upon protesters to demonstrate against the 'threat of Scientology' (Parker, 2008). This threat, according to Anonymous, in response to their threatening YouTube with legal proceedings should they not take down a video being used to mock the organisation, consisted of potential 'human rights abuses and acts of censorship' (Coleman, 2014: 5), as the Church of Scientology 'became a kind of icon for all the bullying corporate powers that try to squelch the free circulation of knowledge in cyberspace' (Urban, 2017: 293). It can be argued, then, that this perceptibly quiet period between 2006 and 2008 can be understood as a kind of

[7]Pittaway (2012) also directs us towards a split in anonymous *4chan* users, and contestation between them. Some bemoaned the moral superiority of those directing its power in more political directions. Pittaway describes this change as a move away from simply a group looking for 'lulz' to one motivated by political circumstances, a shift toward an identity more aligned with the *V for Vendetta* narrative.
[8]Screenshot taken from www.youtube.com
[9]Screenshot taken from www.knowyourmeme.com

'gestation' phase, within which the conditions for Anonymous' emergence were falling in to place. One might say that this takes place within digital territory, but to do so would be to ignore the social and material conditions of each 'Anon' within their social and material location and the range of conditions that they are each faced with for online production and reproduction. From the qualitative dimension of the protest event analysis, it is observable that the influence of Anonymous after this phase is borne out in the attendance of over 7000 individuals protesting in 127 cities worldwide in February 2008, during *'Project Chanology'* or *'OpChanology'* (Cadwalladr, 2012; Olson, 2012; Parker, 2008; Russon, 2014; Stewart-Robertson, 2008; Whyte, 2008). Due to the perceived power held by the Church of Scientology to harass, intimidate and 'fabricate evidence' against opponents, masking appeared to be an important tactic to the protesters. This already demonstrates the importance of a concrete analysis around such practices. That this specific mask was routinely employed by a large proportion of protesters, and that the marches and protests were called upon by an online entity adopting the mask in the first place, demonstrates a clear connection between the mask and Anonymous, and thus some rationale for the mask's use there and elsewhere. Additional waves of protest occurred throughout 2008 as a back and forth between Anonymous and Scientology ensued (Hailey, 2015; Maclean, 2008; Murray, 2008; Pilarczyk, 2008; Ramadge, 2008), though reports of the mask once again died down. The accumulative data for 2008 – where, it must be stated, there is less observable use than is documented in some accounts – demonstrates the extent of this diffusion, as presented in Figure 2. Interesting here, despite the mask's earlier use in Taiwan, is its concentration in what we might regard as Western, or Global North, countries.

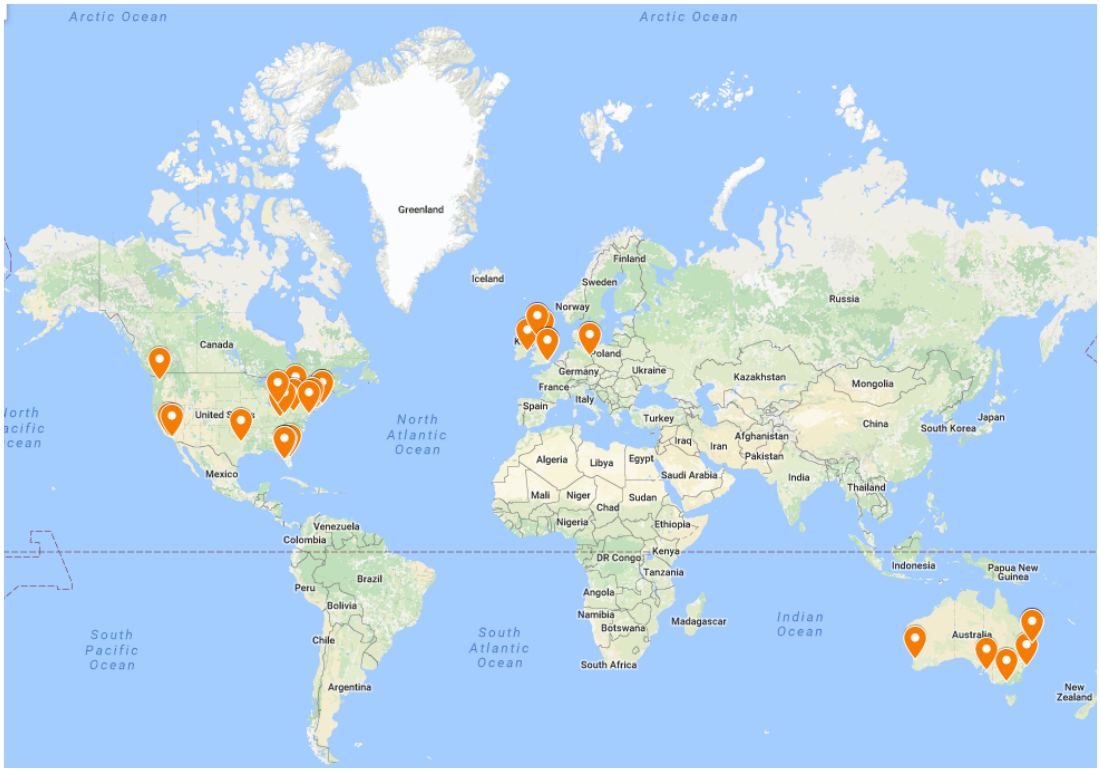

Figure 2. Reported mask sightings in 2008 by location.

Image 5 (left). Scientology protester wearing Guy Fawkes mask, San Francisco, CA[10].
Image 6 (right). Scientology protesters wearing Guy Fawkes masks[11]

[10]Retrieved from www.indybay.org
[11]Image taken by David Shankbone.

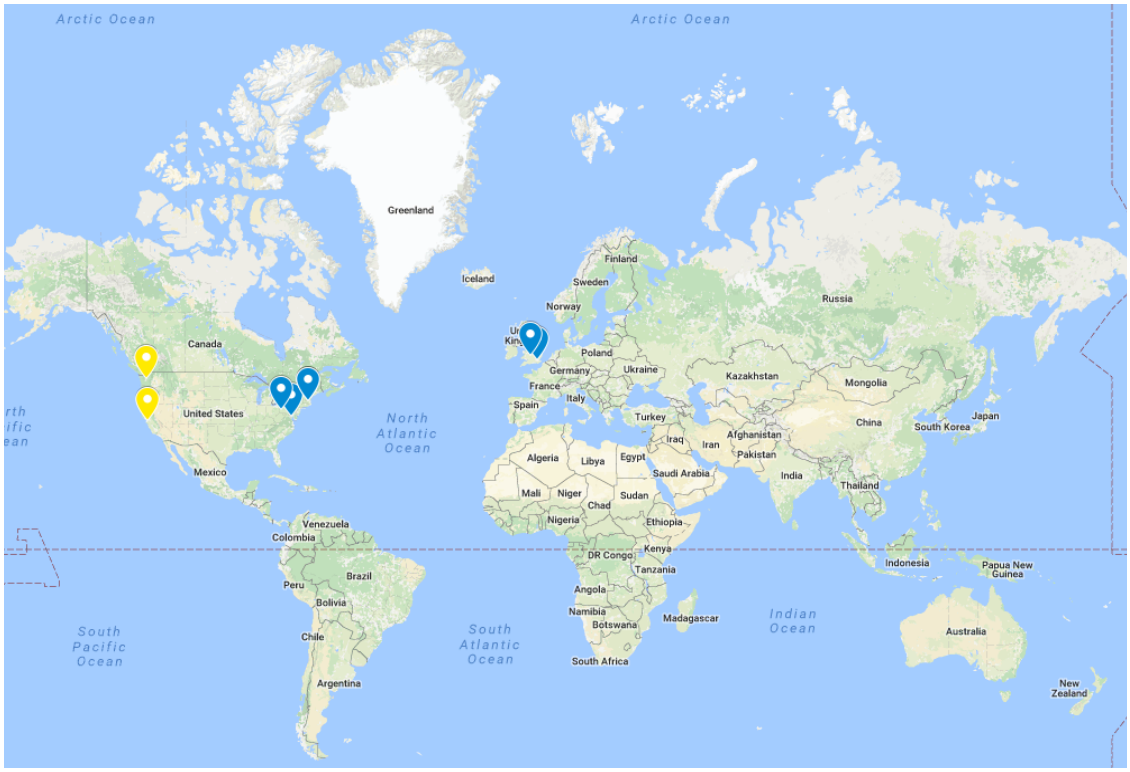

Figure 3. Reported masks sightings in 2009 (blue) and 2010 (yellow) by location, combined.

5.1.3 Occupy and ACTA

As evidenced by the data represented in Figure 3, despite a couple of reoccurring protests against Scientology during 2009 (Rosenfeld, 2014), and a number of other individual protests around other grievances such as the Pittsburgh G20 (Patel, 2009; 'Locals on Hand to Witness G-20 Clashes,' 2009; 'Man in the Mask,' 2009), there is little evidence of the mask in what we might refer to as collective action until 2011. The dormancy in 'real' collective action is once again matched to some degree by the exploits of online users of the mask, often claiming to be under the umbrella of the amorphous Anonymous. For example, in the 2010 online attacks – using distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks – against commercial and corporate websites for their censoring of sensitive information publisher, and whistleblowing website, *WikiLeaks*, in what came to be known as *'Operation Payback'* (Addley & Halliday, 2010). OpChanology clearly marked a change in the consistency of the mask's use, and seemed to provide momentum for a more profound shift in use from October 2011 onwards, as demonstrated by the polynomial trend-line in Figure 1 and by the proliferation of reports in Figure 4. The spikes demonstrated in the graph resonate with the beginning of the global Occupy Movement. Initiated by a small group of activists erecting a camp near Wall Street, apparently influenced by the Arab Spring and a request for protest

by *Adbusters*[12], the movement resulted in camps in over 1500 cities around the world (van Gelder, 2011). According to its website[13], the movement was based on such issues as a lack of trust in elected officials, resistance to the power held by the wealthiest contingent of society and an 'unbalanced and inequitable global economy'. Though it has a clear beginning, the largely peaceful occupation movement has had no clear end, as its name has been adopted by novel protests springing up in numerous areas around the world, long after many of the original protest campsites were cleared by law enforcers (Lee, Tsang, Siu, Ngo, Ng, So, Yu, Chan, Lo & Sung, 2014; Rajaendram, 2014; Rocha, 2015). The mask appears to be an item used relatively early on in this movement (Taylor, 2011), and, indeed, many reports of the mask after 2011 allude to its heavy association with the movement, along with an association with Anonymous (for example, O'Neil, 2013; Parrott, 2012; Slotek, 2012).

Image 7 (left). Captain America or Captain Anonymous[14]
Image 8 (middle). Obama presidential campaign poster by Shepard Fairey[15]
Image 9 (right). Occupy Wall Street poster by Shepard Fairey[16]

Seemingly justifying to some degree the exalted claims of others – for example, claims of movement 'symbol' (Juris, 2012: 261), 'iconic emblem' (Ruiz, 2013: 273), and official 'trademark' (Kohns, 2013: 90) – the mask at this point becomes appropriated with other

[12] https://www.adbusters.org/blogs/adbusters-blog/occupywallstreet.html; it is perhaps necessary to see such protests as multi-causal, relying much on the conduciveness of context, and thus historically specific.
[13] http://www.occupytogether.org/aboutoccupy/#issues
[14] Retrieved from www.sun-sentinel.com
[15] Retrieved from Arnon (2008)
[16] Retrieved form Wilson (2011)

forms, in what we might regard as a process of articulation[17]. In one media report, Valys (2012) presents a particular work of performance artist David Le Roi involving the superimposing of a Guy Fawkes mask on to the face of traditional superhero, Captain America (see Image 7); a superhero that, during the Second World War, was a vital source of American identity and its idealised narratives, around courage and honesty, and one that can be seen to have shaped the self-narrative and behaviour of Americans (Dittmer, 2007). Presumably this relates to Occupy's critique of Wall Street's dishonesty, corruption and insider-trading, as Le Roi foregrounds another system of representation, in the form of the mask, which can be seen as an attempt to critique the idea of this narrative, or demand that it be taken seriously once again, in what is an *intentional use* of certain cultural notations. A similar, and perhaps more well-known, instance of this appropriation of the mask for Occupy comes from the work of Shepard Fairey. Fairey's work became well-known in 2008 with his campaign poster of Barack Obama (see Image 8), designed as an endorsement of the 'fairly progressive' liberal stance of the soon-to-be-President (Arnon, 2008). After the beginning of the Occupy Movement, Fairey re-released the poster (see Image 9) with a Guy Fawkes mask, a hooded jumper, and a plea to President Barack Obama to take note of the '99%' that Occupy stood to protect (Wilson, 2011). The apparent rejection[18], interruption, or perhaps 'jamming' (DeLaure, Fink & Dery, 2017) of the former – what was seen as a 'defining icon of optimism and hope' (McCormick, 2009: 54) – through the use of the Guy Fawkes mask demonstrates its perceived power and the extent to which it can perceptibly be used to inject a variation of meaning.

[17]Indeed, once again there is already a sense here of contestation around closure over meaning, using eclectic but conditioned sources from wider cultural drifts.

[18]In fact, Fairey's response to these claims around the Obama administration, from the news reports, demonstrates a different tact and articulatory attempt, as he claims that the 2011 poster is a 'statement of support to both the man and the cause' and argues that Obama should be a 'potential ally of the Occupy movement' (Jackson, 2011). This demonstrates a different positioning or strategic employment that, away from many others within the Occupy movement, attempts to align powerful establishment figures with the movement. It can therefore be seen as an attempt to build a different counter-hegemonic force, and is perhaps more likely, if successful, to accumulate the various players for an effective historic bloc, something that many within Occupy disagreed with (Gillespie, 2011; Wilson, 2011).

Figure 4. Reported masks sightings in 2011 by location.

It is from the Occupy context that the mask appears to have achieved a critical mass, and thus diffuses more easily between populations on the basis of its own success (Gladwell, 2000), as demonstrated by the clear impact on diffusion observable within Figure 4. That is, it appears as though the mask takes on a life of its own: prior to this, reports of the mask from the protest event analysis totalled 66 with a monthly average of 1.1; after, the number is 1,120, averaging at 28.7 per month. Adding weight to this claim, sixty months' worth of data is included in the former, compared to only forty in the latter. Soon after the Occupy Movement began, the mask is employed across the world as part of protests against the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) that 'critics claim… is a draconian measure that would effectively end freedom of the Internet, and fundamentally change the Internet as we know it' ('Anonymous Victory: EU Suspends ACTA Ratification', 2012). Despite protecting jobs against the impact of counterfeit goods, ACTA, according to protesters, could potentially lead to international trade powers enabling the 'blocking of content on the web' (Olson, 2012). In January 2012, thirty centre-left members of the Polish Parliament covered their faces with Guy Fawkes masks in opposition to ACTA, as did 'thousands of Poles' in Warsaw and Lublin (Myslewski, 2012). Protests also sprung up elsewhere in response to the proposed implementation of the international agreement, including in France, Bulgaria, Latvia, Germany, Sweden and the Czech Republic ('Anti-ACTA Day: Angry Crowds Take Action', 2012; 'Latvians Protest Controversial Internet Pact', 2012; 'Germany Adopts 'Wait

and See' Stand on ACTA', 2012; Stern, 2012). Perhaps demonstrating some concern about such protests as Occupy and those against ACTA, it is from this point that the mask starts to be banned in some of the more authoritarian locations in which it had previously been employed. For example, within the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Bahrain and Brazilian city, Rio de Janeiro, as well as locations such as within Canada (Issa, 2012; Muston, 2013; Stuster, 2013; Tanquintic-Misa, 2013; Ward, 2013). It is also clear that the locations that begin to emerge as using the mask are more diverse than the largely Western countries to which it previously appeared to be limited (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Reported mask sightings in 2012 by location.

It becomes apparent that, as with Occupy (Juris, 2012), Anonymous played an important role in the protests against ACTA and those elsewhere, something that is developed upon in numerous media reports. Indeed, later in 2012 saw not only further protests against ACTA ('Caught in the ACTA: Protests Sweep Europe', 2012; 'ACTA's Death Would Resonate Worldwide', 2012), but also protests initiated by Anonymous across India, in multiple cities as part of *OpIndia*, against the government's perceived attempts to intrude upon the privacy of its citizens. According to Subramanian (2012), the *Information Technology (Amendment) Act*, which the government were seen to be manipulating, 'would allow government officials and investigating agencies to listen in to all phone calls, SMSs and emails without a warrant from a magistrate'. Anonymous attacks on government websites ('Occupy' Waves Hits

Trinamool Site', 2012), as seen with *Operation Chanology* and protests against ACTA, led to action on the streets. It is here that the mask appears to be made available to the practical repertoires of those taking to the streets in India, as 'groups of youths dressed up in suits and sported the iconic Guy Fawkes mask' (Subramanian, 2012). The media, reasonably it seems, once again regard the mask in protest here as the 'hallmark' of Anonymous, and acknowledge the group's decisive role in shaping the protests (Vaidyanathan, 2012).

5.1.4 The Million Mask March

Two events, precisely a year apart, would follow the same pattern with Anonymous as seemingly important catalysts, and were big enough to skew the aforementioned average sightings or reports per month. The fifth of November, 2013 and 2014[19], reshape any conceptualisation of the data as a whole. This is very much evident in Figures 6 and 7. Following an instructive *YouTube* video from Anonymous[20], requesting that protesters avoid violence and anything that would result in detention (Childs, 2013; Kabler, 2013; Shannon, 2013), Guy Fawkes Night on these separate occasions reportedly saw employment of the mask in 373 and 470 locations around the world, respectively (Quinn, 2013; Gilbert, 2013a, 2014; McQuaid, 2013; Shannon, 2013). The maps presented below (Figures 6 and 7) demonstrate the extent of the diversity in its use, no longer limited to those locations we might regard as Western. According to one report in *The New Haven Register*, each event was 'part of a Million Mask March in which simultaneous demonstrations were scheduled to take place at locations around the globe. The events, organized by protesters aligning themselves with the hacker group Anonymous, were staged in response to domestic spying, genetically modified foods, wars, and other issues' (McQuaid, 2013). Indeed, Harbisher (2016: 294) claims that Million Mask March campaigners represent 'a broad range of interests', including those against 'mass state surveillance, the increasing imposition of austerity, political corruption, the politicisation of the internet, and of course, capitalism itself'. This is evident in O'Neill's (2013) piece for CBC News, where, in attempting to vaguely summarise the point of the marches, she employs a message from Anonymous: '[R]emember who your enemies are: billionaires who own banks and corporations who corrupt politicians who enslave the people in injustice' (O'Neill, 2013).

[19]Aligning with a claim from Harbisher (2016), the march appears to have become an annual event, with global action on November 5th, 2015 and 2016.

[20]While Anonymous seemed to be crucial, Reed (2013) reports that the Million Mask Marches were based on membership from not only Anonymous, but also Occupy and libertarian entities such as WikiLeaks and The Pirate Party.

Images 10 and 11. Million Mask March, 2013, in Milan and Sydney, respectively[21]

Figure 6. Reported masks sightings in 2013 by location.

[21]Retrieved from Gilbert (2013b)

Figure 7. Reported mask sightings in 2014 by location.

This wider sense of the injustices of capitalism, or at least a specific form of capitalism, seemed to filter in throughout the reports of the Million Mask Marches ('10 Arrested as London Million Mask March Turns Tense', 2014; Brooks-Pollock, 2014; Quinn, 2013). A Canadian news article, for example, reported groups around the world to 'speak out en masse against corruption and injustice' (O'Neill, 2013). In California, protesters were said to hide their faces to rally against 'government and big business intrusion into their lives' (Million Mask March Protests in Lompoc, 2014). In Glasgow and Edinburgh, members of the protests argued for shedding 'light on corrupt government to set people free from oppression' (Scots Join Worldwide Mask Demo, 2014). The message of these protests appears to be a general concern with global oppression and inequality, provoked by capitalism. As with Occupy, and the diversity of grievances, this caused some to question the point of the protest: 'their message, unclear… their aims, unclear… their faces, hidden. They do not have any demands, and they do not have any plans' (Edgeworth, 2013). Any wider understanding, however, was usually mediated by local concerns and grievances. For example, protesters in Brazilian cities took to the streets in masks, following on from the previous year's protests regarding the hosting of the Football World Cup and the Olympics arguing that the 'money would be better spent on social infrastructure', with protesters particularly concerned about the state of the health and educations systems ('Brazil Protest Groups Call Fresh Demos', 2013). Healthcare is also isolated as a central factor for masked

protesters in El Paso, Texas, as they argue against the imposition of Obamacare within their state (Montes, 2013). In other parts of the United States, NSA surveillance was a protest priority, due to concern with the collection and distribution of private data amongst intelligence agencies[22] ('The Corrupt Fear Us', 2013). Further afield, Indonesia saw protests, in both 2013 and 2014, around censorship, coinciding with cyber-DDOS-attacks from Anonymous (Le Coz, 2013; Marco, 2014; 'The Corrupt Fear Us', 2013). Use of the mask within this protest, then, appeared to draw from wider meaning but in mediated relation to the protesters' own experience in and of that wider meaning. A similar manipulation – what we might regard as articulation – of the wider meaning with the local comes in the form of modified Guy Fawkes masks used at these events, as protesters seemingly march against the actions of their respective states (see Images 12-15).

Images 12, 13, 14, 15. Photos of masked protester stylized with national flags of Romania, Venezuela, Thailand and the U.S.A (left to right).

Figures 4 through 7 effectively indicate the growing popularity and adoption of the Guy Fawkes mask in protest. Combined with Figure 1, and thus the monthly development of reported sightings, presenting the data in such a way makes it clear that the Occupy Movement and the Million Mask Marches mark important moments in the life of this cultural artefact. Not only is the extent of the mask's use clear, and thus my first research

[22]The employment of the mask in claims against Obamacare and the NSA perhaps demonstrate use across the conventional left-right political spectrum, though given the libertarian tendencies of those involved in the development of the mask's popularity, Anonymous, this spectrum is potentially rendered obsolete (Goode, 2015; Steinmetz, 2016).

question in some way answered, from the descriptive account provided above, we can also see that by implication, and through its use in multiple large movements, it appears well established as a tactic within the protest repertoire. The diversity of repertoires within which the mask is employed is important to note here, immediately evident in the multifarious cultural backdrops represented in the data maps above. The data in this form allows the observation that, temporally, diffusion started off very much in what might be referred to as the Western world – North America, Europe and Australia – only venturing into the 'Global South' in 2011, before diffusing fairly comprehensively in 2013 and 2014. Eventually, however, after heavy occurrences in North America and Europe, it becomes clear that the mask diffuses into far more heterogeneous regions. Its appearance becomes frequent in India, Pakistan and the Middle East, along with most of Australasia and Indonesia. As the visual homogeneity brought about by the mask belies the diversity of these different contexts, it seems important here to discuss the data in more depth – to the extent that the protest event analysis makes this available – as there are certain inflections and patterns in the media descriptions provided[23]. The chronological account provided here gives us a sense of some narrative at play, a formal constraint on what is available for understanding, stemming initially from Guy Fawkes.

5.1.5 Narrative Inflections

Numerous articles, superficially similar to the chronology above, allude to the almost-linear trajectory of the Guy Fawkes mask, and, in doing so, imply or openly suggest that this is the basis of its availability in modern day protest (Jones, 2011; Nickelsburg, 2013; Waites, 2011). For example:

> '…the masks, popularized by the comic book and 2005 film '*V for Vendetta*,' became a sign for revolution during the Occupy movement. Fawkes was part of the failed Gunpowder Plot of 1605 in which a group of English Catholics planned to assassinate King James I' (Parker, 2013)
>
> 'The march coincided with Guy Fawkes Day, commemorating the 408th anniversary of a failed assassination attempt on King James I by a group led by Fawkes. At public events, Anonymous participants usually wear Guy Fawkes masks, popularized in the movie "*V for Vendetta*' (Kabler, 2013)
>
> 'For this is the face of Guy Fawkes, transformed into the mask of a modern avenger by artist David Lloyd and writer Alan Moore in their 1980s graphic

[23]Clearly there will be bias here as the articles read, and that are *available* to be read, will be geared towards a certain, most likely 'Western', audience, and all the cultural conventions that this implies.

> novel *V for Vendetta* and popularised by the 2006 film of the comic book – not to mention merchandised' (Jones, 2011)
>
> 'The Guy Fawkes masks have become a common sight among protesters of the Occupy rallies. They are a reference to the famous English historical figure who tried to blow up the House of Lords in the early 17th century. The version of the mask seen in the Occupy movement comes from the popular book "*V for Vendetta*" and its 2006 film adaptation' (Ng, 2011)

The teasing out of these links leads the authors to make a variety of intention-driven conclusions. This can be seen in numerous reports, where some, as earlier, seem more willing to accommodate the championing of Guy Fawkes as an historical emblem; others seem committed to dispelling apparent myths around his motivations, particularly regarding his role as a Catholic supremacist; and still others attempt to dismiss the mask's use entirely by exposing its hypocritical role in the economic culture of the time, as merchandise for multi-national Time Warner, 'feeding' their 'bottom line' (Jones, 2011; Myslewski, 2012). Anonymous also seem to work effectively with the popular narrative conception of Guy Fawkes. In using what is perceived as the imagery of Guy Fawkes, as well as the night upon which the Gunpowder Plot was supposed to be carried out, they are able to strengthen their invented association with the narrative. This is particularly clear in one online attack involving hacking into the Hungarian state website and changing the online version of the Hungarian Constitution. Besides a change in Information Technology worker's rights – receiving a 150% better pension and being allowed to retire at 32 – the rewrite included the addition of a national holiday on the 5th November ('Anonymous Geek-topia: Hackers Change Hungarian Constitution', 2012), thus demonstrating a glorification of the cultural notations that they have already reworked and appropriated. This building of alternative 'realities', through various media platforms in what might be described as cultural convergence (Jenkins, 2006), is observable in other 'articulatory' attempts. For example, by pulling together the use of the mask and Shelley's poem, *The Mask of Anarchy*, Fraser (2012) compares the behaviour of government-backed, public service police in the eviction of Occupy to that of the yeomanry on horseback that attacked a Chartist demonstration of 60,000 protesters in St Peter's Field, Manchester, in 1819.

There is clear contestation here over what the mask means, and therefore how it can be used. This immediately tells us something important about the Guy Fawkes mask and the meaning ascribed to it: that it is open-ended, that there are multiple possibilities in the way that it is interpreted, and that there is intentionality behind the way that this interpretation occurs. Given the diversity of the locations in which the mask is employed, this open-

endedness is significant, and quite evidently plays a role in its capacity for inclusion in disparate protest repertoires. Some might regard this as the 'overflowing of the signifier by the signified' (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014: 11), a removal of the sign from any anchoring to the 'real'. Here we can draw upon a claim by Lewis Call that the mask is 'infinitely flexible', which seems persuasive given the data outlined above (and the accumulated reports demonstrated in Figure 1). However, with the data obtained from the protest event analysis, I will demonstrate below[24] that the contestation of meaning is always in relation to a context, to a certain set of parameters defined by experience. Such a thing can already be observed above, as with the resistance to capitalism, where the wider sets of meaning are filtered through local grievances and understandings. The Shepard Fairey and Le Roi artwork, too, are in both cases constrained, at least to a degree, by the occurrences within the United States. Three case studies below will therefore build on this to demonstrate the contestation, and thus necessary contextual complexity, in understanding meaning-making around such a cultural artefact.

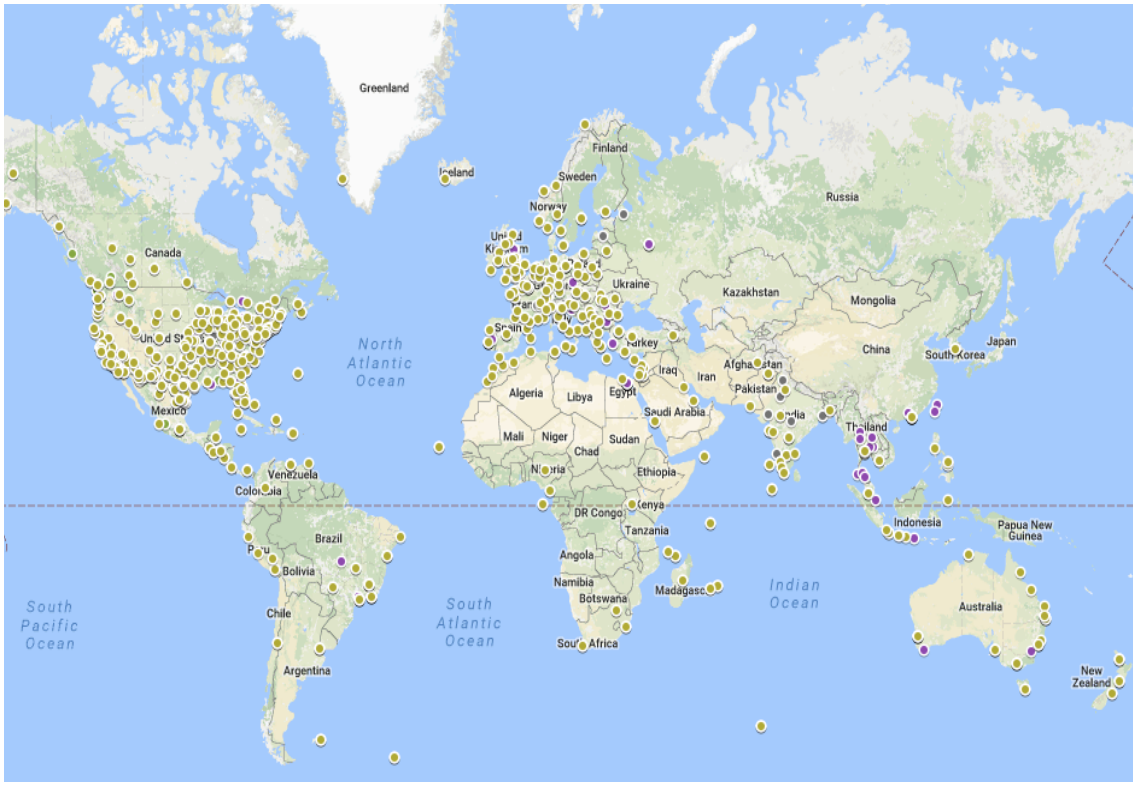

Figure 8. Accumulated sightings of the mask by location.

[24]This has also already been demonstrated above in the Million Mask March protester's claims of local grievances and each protest's specific claims, whether tied to perceived wider tendencies, such as capitalism, or not.

5.2 The Contextual Complexity of Meaning-Making

5.2.1 Thailand and the Palestine-Israel Conflict

One of these examples emerges within the context of Thailand. Beginning on the 22nd May 2014, Thailand experienced a military coup[25], which the head of the military, General Prayuth Chan-ocha, justified by referring to the dangers of escalating protests (Hodal, 2014). The protests he refers to are manifestations of years of unrest between the political parties, past and present. The – now former – democratically elected Prime Minister, Yingluck Shinawatra, of the Pheu Thai party, is the sister of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, and is seen by many as a proxy for Thaksin after his ousting in 2006 (McCargo, 2014). The Shinawatra support – the 'red-shirts' – come predominantly from the Northern poorer areas of Thailand where their policies aim to win a large majority (Mydans & Fuller, 2011). The opposing ultra-nationalist 'yellow-shirts' are organised as The People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD); it was their anti-corruption protests in 2005 and 2006 that led to an earlier military coup against Thaksin, thereby leading to his exile (Palatino, 2011). The yellow-shirts are generally regarded as more conservative, and are made up of royalists wearing the king's colour ('Profile: Thailand's Reds and Yellows', 2012). The use of the mask represents a further movement, a movement supposedly new and aligned with the values of Anonymous.

Image 16. Screenshot from the V for Thailand (white mask party) Facebook page.

[25]Thailand is fairly well acquainted with military coups, with eighteen such events since the end of absolute monarchy in 1932 (Chachavalpongpun, 2014)

The ‘white mask’ movement, according to Finch (2013), first appeared in protest gatherings in November 2011 by the group *Siam Samakki* (United Siam) and was followed immediately by the creation of an Anonymous Thailand Facebook page using the mask as a defining symbol (Image 16), and tapping into the ‘anti-corruption’ and ‘anti-tyranny’ ideological push of Anonymous (‘Guy Fawkes and the Red Goliath’, 2013). For example, the *Bangkok Post* reports the white mask wearers as ‘anti-government, anti-censorship and anti-multi-national’ (‘Anti-‘Thaksin Regime’ protest at CW’, 2013). Unlike the ‘leader-less’ Anonymous, however, a leader has emerged from within the movement: former core member of the Yellow Shirts, Samran Viroj, an association that has caused much criticism of the movement’s ‘anti-Thaksin agenda’ (Finch, 2013; Nostitz, 2013). *V for Thailand* (a clear allusion to the trajectory already mapped out here), as the cyber dimension of the white mask group also calls itself, has, according to a report from Agence-France Press, ‘swiftly developed a major social media profile railing against the government and Thaksin’ (‘Thailand ‘White Mask’ Protesters Rally in Bangkok’, 2013). The peculiarity of the Thai situation is that it is not the white mask movement alone that adopted the mask; in response, the red shirts, supporting Yinluck Shinawatra, also adorned the mask stylised with the red of their party (see Image 17). The fresh meanings, here, are indicative of characteristic forms of discourse within the host cultural context; in the case of Thai politics, this may refer to the colour red, symbolizing loyalty to the Thaksins, the rural and the poor (Ungpakorn, 2009) or perhaps the style of the mask which may resemble more traditional elements of Thai culture. Besides this, the practice may be a reactionary appropriation of the tactics of their perceived political opponents.

Image 17. Red-shirts (Pro-Yingluck protesters) in downtown Bangkok[26]

The 'double-sided' occurrence within Thailand is evident too within the long-lasting conflict between Israel and Palestine. This also demonstrates a use of the mask in both offline and online forms of struggle, as both 'sides' appear to have a 'branch' of the amorphous Anonymous, potentially highlighting a contest over identity and the very image of the mask. Based on a struggle that is far older, the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first have seen a dramatic change in ownership of land within the region through occupation and annexing. Despite what Israel sees as the end of occupation in 2005, Palestinians, represented to a degree by Islamic group Hamas, still protest against the control of their 'borders, waters and airspace' by Israeli forces, in the name of Israel's safety ('Gaza-Israel Conflict: Is the Fighting Over?', 2014) along with further proposed 'land-grabs' (Beaumont, 2014). Anonymous's involvement, though not the first involvement in the conflict as a whole (Greenberg, 2012; Protalinski, 2012), was initially on the side of Palestine and heightened when a Palestinian protester, wearing a Guy Fawkes mask within offline protest, Tayyeb Shehada, was shot by Israeli troops (see Image 18). In response, the Palestinian Anonymous claimed to have shut down over a hundred government websites (Vinton, 2014). This caused another group claiming to be Anonymous on the Israeli side of the conflict to retaliate by taking down Palestinian websites. Both sides of this cyber-struggle are represented online by the Guy Fawkes mask, as can be seen on the Anonymous Palestine twitter page (See Image 19) and the Anonymous Israel message left on the Palestinian websites that were attacked (see Image 20). This shows not only the seemingly strong link between Anonymous and the

[26]Retrieved from www.bangkokpost.com

mask's diffusion, but also, as with the Thai situation, the contextual complexity of its employment.

Image 18. Tayyeb Shehada's mask, with bullet hole[27]

Image 19. Twitter screenshot of Anonymous Palestine[28]

[27]Retrieved from www.occupiedpalestine.wordpress.com

[28]Screenshot taken 30/09/14

Hacked by Israel Anonymous
Follow Us: twitter.com/IsraelAnonymou2
FREE GAZA FROM HAMAS
Anonymous Support Israel, We will not allow cyber attacks on israel!

Image 20. Anonymous Israel message left behind on cyber-attacked Palestinian websites[29]

It could be convincingly argued, in each of these contexts, that the mask is taken from that extended repertoire provided in multiple locations by local action, and represents some general notion of anonymised conflict. However, both the Thai and Israel-Palestine situations demonstrate to us the importance of the contextual occurrences, the local histories and how they connect to wider social relations, when thinking about the processes involved in adopting an 'innovation'. Once again, the importance of looking to the specific context, to try to better understand the conditioning factors at play in any processes of meaning-making, becomes clear. In the first example, the mask is adapted to suit the culture of the adopters (Image 17), and to differentiate between opposing groups. The online presentation, in the second example (depicted in images 19 and 20), demonstrates a similar articulation with other contextual symbolism, notably their respective flags and the Star of David. In each case it is clear, however, that they borrow heavily from the wider understanding of the mask as related to Anonymous or as a banner of resistance, and thus more depth is required to fully understand these cases. More depth is observable in another case, that of Occupy London, which also serves it seems as a turning point or a crucial moment in the career of the mask. Obviously there are important differences here – geographically, culturally, whether conflict is between protesters and the state, a wider economic system, political rivals, or oppression by some other group – but the depth of media data obtainable allows a closer understanding of cultural contestation over meaning, and thus the availability of the mask in protest.

[29]Retrieved from www.jspacenews.com

5.2.2 The Cultural Specificities of Occupy London

Looking at the media reports around one specific Occupy location, Occupy London[30], it is possible to see the contestation over meaning between different stakeholders. Leaving aside the particular agenda of individual news agencies that likely pervade the orientation of their reporters, there are numerous examples of attempts at imposition of equivalence between interpretation and reality. Messieh (2011), for example, reports that:

> "Some activists said that donning the masks is a way of reminding governments that authority can be challenged by the masses. "I think people are giving a polite nod to a kind of violent radicalism," said Laurie Penny, a blogger and frequent protester"

This is similar to Ruiz's (2013: 273) contention that the mask becomes a way of revealing and therefore challenging power, in that it 'brings together geographically dispersed groups of protesters by blanking out the identity of the individual wearer and projecting the anonymous 99 percent in their place. The 'visual power of many 'bodies' speaking both to each other and to a larger public through the image' (Jones, 2009: 4), then, brings about the suspension of power relations, which, as Bakhtin (1968: 256) might argue, is enough to foster 'a realization that established authority and truth are relative'. Similarly, Lush and Dobnik (2011) present a protester claiming that the mask 'comes from the idea of rising up against the government' and representing 'the fact that the people have the real power'. The same authors describe another man at Occupy London claiming that the utility of the mask is in its ability of 'unifying the world under one symbol' as well as in the anonymity it provides, enabling protesters to do a 'lot more more than they would if they didn't have the masks' (Lush & Dobnik, 2011). Such a notion of a unitary symbol is expressed by an activist in the account provided by O'Brien (2011) where Anonymous member 'Malcolm' claimed the mask had become 'an international symbol for rebellion and anonymity'. The *V for Vendetta* animator, David Lloyd, discussing Occupy, describes the mask as 'a common brand and a convenient placard to use in protest against tyranny' (Hanks, 2011). Hui (2011) also reports a protester making such a claim, and elaborating that 'it's about the power of a shared idea in overcoming state control'. O'Brien's account also hints at the differentiation of outlooks around the mask's adoption, as he quotes Joshua, another protester, arguing that 'some people wear it to make a fashion statement, others because they know what it's about'.

The former perspective, through the language of fashion, chimes more with negative comprehensions of the mask in protest. Others, in a clearly damning tone and among

[30]Also known as Occupy St Pauls and Occupy London Stock Exchange (OccupyLSX).

diverse speculations, draw upon this idea. For example, Godwin (2011), in the Evening Standard, asks of the mask's purpose at Occupy London:

> "At first I wondered if the wearers wanted to preserve their anonymity - but unless they intend to cause trouble, there should be no need. Then it struck me that they want to intimidate - but surely that is the opposite of what the protest is supposed to be about? Or perhaps they simply want to look *chic* - but it just makes them look immature"

In also criticising the protest as a whole, Jenkins (2011a), too, mentions fashion, as part of what he perceives of as poorly thought-out activism, adopting what appear to be the 'same-old' protest moves:

> "The slogans recall those that have been so ineffective in challenging the outrageously vacuous G-summits, or the no less outrageous American and British wars of aggression, that euphemised as "wars of choice". There are the usual tents, plastic sheets, naive slogans and obsession with press coverage. Guy Fawkes masks are the fashion in London. Everywhere is "in crisis", money is theft, bankers are loathsome and, our old friend, "the revolution will not be televised"'"

Jenkins (2011b) also criticises the apparent cultural heritage of the mask, particularly stemming from Guy Fawkes. In doing so he builds an alternative history to that of the protesters, though one that many consider more accurate (Elder, 2011), as he describes the 'added absurdity' – what Jones (2011) describes as a 'colossal forgetting of history' – that is an 'emblem… borrowed from Guy Fawkes, champion of Roman Catholic authoritarianism against an embryo Parliament'. Despite the frequent reports, around most Occupy locations, of non-violent protest (Gani, 2011; Walker & Butt, 2011), the dangers of such authoritarianism are ascribed to the mask elsewhere too, though not always through direct opinion.

Others appear to weave together different varieties of protest in their reporting technique. An example of this is CBS News, where a reporter adjoins two separate protest groups, one renowned for violence:

> "For many demonstrators, a sinister mask fashioned by Guy Fawkes, the revolutionary who attempted to blow up the British parliament buildings more than 400 years ago, has become a worldwide symbol of anarchy and revolution. For years, black-clad demonstrators known as the Black Block have been showing up at marches in Europe and the U.S." (Pelley, Cowan, Mason, Crawford, Pizzey & Hartman, 2011)

Waites (2011) introduces the same issue via a comic-enthusiast and bystander, who claims that, from its role in the *V for Vendetta* novel, 'it's not a symbol of passive resistance but a

symbol of active terrorism'. He goes on to argue that 'the idea of the V mask being appropriated as a political symbol is inherently ridiculous' and that 'it's like assuming you can bring down a government using a light sabre or a He-Man sword'. Activist and founder of the blog 'Beyond Clicktivism', Tim Hardy, according to Apps (2011), also claims that it is 'a very powerful, violent symbol', based on 'very anti-parliamentary, very anti-establishment' themes. The presentation in the media articles, and actual material manifestation, of the mask at Occupy[31] are demonstrative of this association with violence and danger. For example, Kabler (2013) reports from Charleston, West Virginia, that:

> "Tuesday's participants at the Capitol had such masks, but wore them on the back or top of their heads at the request of Capitol police. A 1988 state law makes it illegal to wear masks that conceal one's face while on state property, punishable by fines of up to $500 and/or up to one year in jail"

Another point of conflict already mentioned here, a claim that the money paid for the masks goes into the coffers of the multi-national corporation, Warner Bros, appears in numerous reports (Lamont, 2011; Lush & Dobnick, 2011; Waites, 2011), and marks a heavy criticism on those that employ it:

> "There is a twist to the story though, an irony at the centre of this angry protest against faceless corporation and it is this: the masks sell around 100,000 a year including around 16,000 in the UK but who do you think gets some of the profits? The company that made the film. Warner Bros. One of the biggest corporations in the world" (Smith, 2011)
>
> "…the mask is an official movie byproduct licensed by Time Warner, which has thus found a way to profit from the Crisis of Capitalism" (Jones, 2011)

In contrast to the negative emphasis placed on this, other reports pull on the arguments of protesters who realise that the proceeds of the masks tend to go here. Instead of simply reporting the 'naivety' of the activists, they instead discuss the fact that many protesters either print off 'cut-out' masks, or purchase 'knockoffs from abroad to circumvent the corporation' (Carbone, 2011; Hallowell, 2011; Lush & Dobnick, 2011). While discussed in numerous contexts (c.f. Kaulingfreks & Kaulingfreks, 2013), this debate, along with the others described here, not only around the Occupy movement, effectively demonstrates not only the amount of contestation over meaning that exists, it also shows the large variety of disparate elements available to be actively pieced together, or articulated, as each account looks to lay its epistemological claim to the mask. It is worth elaborating briefly here on how

[31] Albeit elsewhere, though also at later associated London marches (Gayle, 2016; Turner & Finnigan, 2015)

my theoretical inclinations from previous chapters can begin to understand this process.

5.3 Understanding Cultural Contestation of Meaning

The chronology, or career, of the mask demonstrates multiple attempts to impose meaning upon the mask. Often this is something undertaken by those that report the mask's employment; at other times it is by those that are interviewed or quoted within reports; and in other cases it is part of a larger picture drawn in commentary around wider issues. We can also see it as part of a cultural attempt to resonate with wider audiences, as in the initial *V for Vendetta* graphic novel and film. What I have demonstrated here could be understood within the lens of framing, where each stakeholder looks to strategically frame for others a certain account of the mask. This would certainly be useful, but not entirely adequate. For one thing, an over-emphasis on calculation in strategy perhaps swings this a little too close to the rationalist paradigm. This is too static, too voluntarist, and too open to radical pluralism. For all its benefits – most centrally, its focus on meaning – it more often than not fails to develop an understanding of why certain things work and others don't. In this case, why those particular arguments around the mask, described above, are and *can be* made, when others are not and cannot. My argument, as per Chapter Three, is that the historically-located cultural notations, encompassing and bound up with social and *material* relations – thus also taking us beyond much of new social movement theorising – direct or condition what is *available* for 'articulation'. These are the notations found in 'common sense' that are tied up in particular ideological directions, as part of cultural production, and then imposed in a way that may or may not resonate with the experience of others.

The notions played upon above of 'violent radicalism', 'unity', 'people power'; the conventions of fashions, fads, and crazes; the changing historical narratives contained in the Gunpowder Plot; and the ideological continuities of capitalism: these must all be taken as *actively created* – and therefore based on the experience of social, material conditions – cultural notations, with their own embedded histories. This can be seen to some extent in the previous examples, though with less detail due to the superficiality in some of the data: the Thai Red-Shirt appropriation involving those cultural ties to the poor and to the Shinawatras; the articulation of the mask with Captain America, by La Voi, and the subsequent manipulation that this brings; the fixing of the mask to Obama's Hope poster by Shepard Fairey, directly accosting and jamming particular meanings with the addition of other elements. Unlike the claims of Call (2008) briefly alluded to above, then, regarding the mask's 'infinite flexibility', these examples can surely only be produced based on the

experiences of those that create them and can only be successful based on the experiences of those in the respective audience. The relative distance between the two is all-important here. In this sense, meaning is *actively* anchored, without full structuring, but without the extensive voluntarism implied by these other radically pluralist postmodern or static framing theories. Selection is always selection from something, and thus Williams' selective tradition moves us beyond general innovation diffusion models that fail to grasp why certain innovations might resonate where others do not (c.f. Hedstrom, 1994; Mahajan, Muller & Bass, 1990; Rogers, 2003). To fully flesh out the implications of this theoretical outlook, it is to richer qualitative data with a more specific sample that one would need to turn. I do this in the following chapters, with the final example here, Occupy London.

5.4 Summary

Through the use of a protest event analysis, using media reports, the ability of the Guy Fawkes mask to become available, to sit comfortably within the practical repertoire, readily available in the practical consciousness, of so many people is clear. This chapter has effectively answered my first research question pertaining to the extent of the mask's use and has demonstrated a number of important things. First, the mask's use in protest has been evidenced as widespread and diffused into diverse settings around the world. Second, the cultural career of the mask is multifaceted, but appears to be conditioned by certain important events and occurrences, and the various representations of data in this chapter have helped in signifying crucial points in the life of the mask. The origins, early uses, or early adopters of the mask; the periods of growing momentum; the peaks and troughs in its employment; the point of critical mass: these have all been made evident through analysis. A third issue demonstrated here is the impact of online, amorphous entities in organising and choreographing street protest. The relationship between these two dimensions, as with other studies (Mercea, 2011; Steinert-Threlkeld, Mocanu, Vespignani & Fowler, 2015; Van Laer, 2010), emerges as a central aspect of modern-day protest. Crucial to this work, however, is a fourth factor within the theoretical realm of understanding processes of diffusion. More specifically, the importance of meaning-making to such diffusion processes. The examples unearthed here demonstrate no simple diffusion between different contexts, but seem to require that the surrounding environment and context be taken firmly into account.

Some, such as Call, in a particularly postmodern orientation, claim that 'the real power' of the mask is that 'you can seize hold of it for any political purpose you want' (cited in Lush & Dobnick, 2011). Elsewhere, Call (2008) claims that, allegedly like all signs, the face

represented by the mask has become 'infinitely flexible' in its capacity to mean, enabling 'activists to articulate an open-ended range of protesting positions'. Ruiz (2013: 274) agrees claiming that the mask as become the 'postmodern answer to the banner'. The diversity of available meaning demonstrated in the varied cultural employments here and in the reports around Occupy London certainly suggests a high level of flexibility, but infinitely so, I feel, is too large a claim to make. Already within *this* chapter it has been shown that local issues are conflated and combined with global issues of (capitalist) oppression, and the mask is therefore made available on the basis of this. It has also been demonstrated that particular avenues of thought, or *traces* – such as 'unity', 'people power' and fashions – are a central part of those articulatory attempts and cannot simply be *anything*. Using the specific context of Occupy London, the next chapter will further challenge this slip into radical pluralism (Carroll & Ratner, 1994), whilst continuing to develop beyond the ideas of current social movement theory, through a sustained application of the notions foregrounded in Chapter Three. It will demonstrate the complexity of meaning-making, beyond any idea of postmodern, unlimited semiosis. Occupy London provides a particularly fecund set of parameters given its role in the development – as a moment of critical mass – of the mask. It's temporal and spatial proximity to the Million Mask March, another crucial point in the mask's career, makes it all the more worthy a setting. Taking up this task, the next two chapters will build on the ideas discussed here with the richer qualitative data collected from those at and around Occupy London. In doing so, the meaning-making processes involved in the use of the Guy Fawkes mask – the cultural production and reproduction – will be further analysed, and, with this, so too will any understanding of the employment of cultural artefacts within social movements.

Chapter Six. Historical Determinants of a Cultural Artefact.

The last chapter clearly demonstrated the extent to which the Guy Fawkes mask is used in social movements, and how this has developed over time in relation to other events. The protest event analysis demonstrated the apparent accessibility of the mask across diverse cultures spanning almost the entire world. It is obvious that in each of these settings, in order to incorporate it into one's practice, the mask must be *made to mean.* One might argue, with Call (2008), then, that 'the face of Fawkes thus demonstrates… that the symbol can be just as arbitrary as the sign', and therefore can be seen as 'infinitely flexible'. Indeed, the scale of its use certainly permits an assumption that the mask is what Barthes (2009) would regard as an 'empty' signifier, in that its polysemy makes definitional closure very difficult, if not impossible. As to this point, Kellner argues that the 'visage' of Guy Fawkes 'embodies the slipping signifier to which no stable meaning can be attached' (Keller, 2008: 10). As was clear in the last chapter, I will argue against this claim, at least in its extreme of unlimited semiosis. By looking more specifically at the Occupy London movement – which emerged in the last chapter as a crucial moment in the mask's career – I challenge any notion that the potentialities of this sign are 'infinitely flexible', by demonstrating the extent to which they are constrained by socio-cultural, material and historical relations. With the mask's popularity and use effectively evidenced, then, it is the task of this chapter to develop upon some of the themes that emerged in the preceding one, particularly regarding the historical availability of such a practice. In doing so, and in line with the perspective outlined in Chapter Three, the second research question – within a particular protest event what can be understood as the conditions for such a practice? – can be answered empirically.

Other studies have also looked to the social, material and historical location of certain cultural items and artefacts. For example, Hebdige's (1979) seminal contribution, *Subcultures: The Meaning of Style*, makes mention of numerous artefacts that become crucial representations of deeper sets of social relations, often becoming a manipulated resistance to these, with varying degrees of success. To isolate one, Hebdige refers to Genet's story about a tube of Vaseline, to which its owner, as a symbol of his homosexual identity, is deeply committed. The tube of Vaseline is confiscated by Spanish police, however, and thus becomes representative of an oppressive social system. Hebdige (1979: 115) also discusses the use of the safety-pin by post-war working class youth subcultures as the adhesive component that makes reference to the piecing together of elements from different epochs, and the 'relative material poverty either directly experienced and

exaggerated or sympathetically assumed, and which in turn was made to stand for the spiritual paucity of everyday life'. Willis (1978), too, discusses the 'motor-bike boys', or 'rockers', and thus the symbolic importance of the motor-bike as a means of demonstrating control in the face of death. With far greater depth, both Hebdige and Willis demonstrate how these items are forged into something more iconic through a use of those cultural aspects already at hand. Their attempt, 'successful' or 'unsuccessful'[1], rearticulates these to a form of subcultural resistance from the dominant culture. It is the content of this articulation, and where this comes from historically and socially, that can be investigated in the interviewee's discussions of the mask, and, in doing so foregrounds the range of potentialities and the relative inflexibility of such 'signs'.

The argument here, then, is that in each of the locations where the mask has been observed, it hasn't simply been 'free-floating', landing conveniently within each setting to be employed at some universal subject's leisure. The mask, my argument goes, must be made to mean. As with all other objects, it only makes sense as a belaboured one. That is, in each socio-cultural, material context, its interpretation will be guided by that which is at hand, that which is experienced, and thus a form of labour is undertaken whether one realises this or not. It is therefore to the practice of meaning-making, undertaken within the available range of possibilities, itself enabled by previous practice and experience in given geographical, social and material circumstances, that one must turn to understand the mask within any specific context. The interviewee data foreground a number of central restraints upon the meaning of the mask, such as: its practical use and the subsequent impact of this; notions of surveillance drawn from diverse sources; the demands of the media to amplify and sensationalise protest; and the role of identity formation in the contemporary era. This chapter will cover each of these, though not merely as disparate themes. Indeed, it is at the depths of culture, pertaining in particular to neoliberalism, that we find the connections between them, and this will mark the final section of the chapter.

6.1 Collective Anonymity

As suggested by media reports in the last chapter (Godwin, 2011), perhaps the simplest, or most obvious, explanation for the mask's employment is the requirement to avoid reprisal by the police during and after protest activity. This is particularly acute in the account of Mike, a student-protester in his 30s:

[1]This is another avenue of discussion altogether, but a similar debate around what counts as success and the contestation over this will be had in the next chapter.

> "…say if you go up and say the police are arresting someone, and you go up to intervene... that's something where it makes sense to have your face covered. Because if you're dragging someone away from a policeman and they're looking in your face, there's every chance […] if you ran into that same van of police again, they could peg you as the person who dragged someone away from being arrested, so it always seems like a perfectly sensible thing to do..." (Mike)

Particularly with the advent of police 'head-cams' and video recording devices[2] (c.f. Starr, 2006), the interviewees were far more sympathetic to use of the mask. This can be understood as the technologically-dependent[3] institutionalisation through legislation – and then practice – of a particular formation's agenda, where the particular formation has dominance to the extent that it is trusted with state power. This of course meets resistance from other formations, making up the restrictions within which such legislation is confined (see for example, Courdet, Butin & Metayer, 2015). This is a useful example of the meeting point between different unequally empowered formations, each of whom attempts to achieve closure over meaning. Such an imbalance of power, where one side is dominant to the extent it immediately has access to both coercion and wider societal consent, leads to what can be seen as the necessity of techniques to avoid retribution. Mike, for example, continues:

> "But there's also like this more pragmatic like ad hoc moment when like suddenly something escalates and the police approach changes or you know, people are going to do something suddenly that's going to be more provocative and then you'll see people covering their faces who didn't have it beforehand" (Mike)

Robert, an activist involved on occasion with the protest group UKUncut and there from almost the beginning at Occupy St. Paul's, also sees the increased desire for anonymity:

> "Well, look at it this way, you have cameras at every protest these days and so do the police, so there is no chance, no chance in hell that those kids are going to be walking around London smashing shit up with nothing on their faces… it's mental to say otherwise… in my opinion, 100% they wouldn't if they could be picked up on camera" (Robert)

The mask's popularity can be, to some extent, clearly understood in these terms, as the annulment of 'the individual's authorship of the state's representation' (Kohns, 2013: 97),

[2]Worn by law enforcers, a double surveillance mechanism exists where both the officers and those they are policing are under surveillance.

[3]Though this is not meant to refer to any technological determinism, as the technology will have developed in a particular context.

and as a method of concealment to avoid punishment and detention (Gledhill, 2012; Merrifield, 2013).

Practically, most masks provide some level of anonymity when worn and can therefore be seen as a 'pragmatic means of hiding one's face, evading identification and, therefore, capture by the authorities' (Ruiz, 2013: 266). This seems a wise choice in many of the contexts in which the mask is employed, particularly those sites under authoritarian rule where civil rights are less likely to be protected (Starr, 2006). The context of London, however, also appears to be one where police presence is perceived as particularly forceful as demonstrated in protests that might be regarded as contemporary relatives to Occupy, such as the 2009 G20 London protests and the Million Mask March (Glass, 2010; Greer & McLaughlin, 2012). Certainly, some of the activists had experienced such treatment by police officers at events. Harry, one of the younger of the respondents, heavily involved in the social media side of Occupy and other events, claims that at the Million Mask March he

> "… got treated pretty rough by the police [...] they basically split the group and me and my mates got split up, tried to get back to them through a gap but got jumped by three of them, face first into the ground, scratched up my face… on the road"

Serena, a peaceful protester involved in the founding of the Reclaim Love movement, demonstrates both the perceived importance of Occupy and the perceptible threat of violence from those enforcing the law:

> "I've been an activist for a very very long time, and when I saw everyone putting up tents at the end of the day I was like 'oh my god', it was like 'it's actually happening' and then waking up the next morning without being beaten up, waking up without being beaten up, was like oh my god... it's actually really happening"

The general perception of policing in London, then, built up over time through experience, and the interaction with others' experience, creates a set of conditions conducive for activists to consider their safety. The mask therefore becomes a useful addition to the protest repertoire – though, in abstraction, it seems important to argue that this could be *any* mask.

There is, however, certainly reasoning evident as to why activists would wear the *same* mask. Those activists that spoke about the mask in this way all made reference to the need for the mask to be a collective thing to function in the intended way. For example, Greg, a photographer with a particular interest in protest, claims that:

> "…if everyone is wearing the same thing they don't need to worry about being singled out afterwards or by the police"

Mike, too, reflects upon this, but with an interesting analogy:

> "I think really you could probably be identified pretty easily if everyone looks different and covers their face, as opposed to say the like Black Bloc approach of everyone looking the same from the start. So there's a difference a bit I think between like planned face covering which is done collectively, it's the difference between like a chameleon and a zebra. Like a chameleon covers its face to like mask itself against its surroundings if you like, whereas a zebra has a camouflage which works because they run against each other and the lion can't separate one from the rest"

As with a dazzle[4] of zebra, there is therefore safety in numbers. The Guy Fawkes mask can thus be understood, at least in part, as a collective and potentially planned mode of resisting arrest, particularly when the expectation this may happen is elevated, due to an understanding of contemporary police tactics. Wearing uniform attire pays dividends for the protesters, who are able to resist detention in a context where such a thing appears more likely. Of course, we are only slightly closer to understanding the place of this particular mask, though we know that at the concrete level it is the most popular. One way in which this can be understood is in the idea of the 'politics of no one', a notion commonly associated with the Zapatistas (Wong & Brown, 2013), and which appears to be a constitutive part of the *V for Vendetta* story (Bulloch, 2007; Call, 2008; Gray, 2010).

The 'politics of no one', discussed by a number of the interviewees, involves the unifying basis of uniform anonymity, and appears to resemble the physical manifestation of Hardt and Negri's (2004) notion of the politics of the swarm (see also Kaulingfreks and Kaulingfreks, 2013). For example, Marie – a life-long activist heavily involved in the women's movement in the 1970s and 1980s and now an editor of a left-wing journal – talking about similarities with the Zapatistas claims that,

> "…you know, where we are all leaders... where we are all Subcommandante Marcos, so that played a particular role of avoiding a very explicit hierarchy... or that was the claim"

In a similar fashion, Mike suggests:

> "…that is part of the rationale, and like, the reason the Zapatistas talk about covering their faces, you know loads of Marcos' first communiques talk about why we cover our face. So it's all about 'we could be anyone'"

[4]The contextually relevant collective noun for zebra.

Richie, the one respondent with a particular interest in graphic novels having worked in a graphic novel store, suggests that:

> "it's definitely got something about... like something about everybody being equal, or being one... you know, like in the story, it's about all of us being V, you know, we all have a role to play, erm... and I guess together we're stronger..."

As with the role of Subcommandante Marcos, the mask works to both 'rattle convention' (Burbach, 2001) and to mobilise disparate groups under a broad banner, where the idea is greater than the aggregate of mask wearers (Knasnabish, 2010). According to *Notes from Nowhere* (2003: 64), '…anyone can put on a ski mask and say 'I am Marcos'. In fact he [Marcos] says that Marcos does not exist, but is simply a window, a bridge, a mediator between worlds. He says that we are all Marcos'. A similar theme is at play here. *V for Vendetta*, as stated in the previous chapter, emphasises the power of an idea, embodied by the protagonist *V*, to unite disparate, oppressed groups (Bulloch, 2007). In his interview, John, whose first real venture into protest was at Occupy London, discusses the notion of '*the people'* 'coming out and changing things', or 'taking on those in power'. Resonating with the accounts of Occupy activists given by reporters in the previous chapter, and of some of the reporters themselves (see, for example, Lush & Dobnik, 2011), 'the people' are unified in their anonymity and thus, with both the Zapatistas and the *V for Vendetta* narrative, represent the oppressed waking up, mobilising and making a change, a change where the ideal tends toward revolution.

While the Zapatista influence of 'being anybody', or everybody being Marcos, is strong here it is from the film that the biggest influence seems to stem. As Mike suggests,

> "…so you've got two things in *V for Vendetta*, you've got the final moment of the democratic mass emerging, just 'the people', literally is performed on the streets of London, and it's everyone and they all look the same, and they're all *V*, and then there's V who's the kind of heroic saviour. If it was just one of those things then the mask's explicit meaning in the film would be a bit clearer, but it's interesting on the street you are taking on the persona both of that everyone but also of that singular hero"

The cultural mainstay of the 'hero' emerges, then, from the *V for Vendetta* story in what can be seen as a merging or active articulation of two cultural notations, one dominant within the institutions and formations of our time and one residual. The residual form we can understand as the importance of the *collective* and of unification, seen prominently within older social movements such as the labour movement (Dean, 2009), developed within specific socio-material conditions, manifested in, for example, trade unionism and the

welfare state (Baldwin, 1999; Offe, 1985). The dominant, it can be argued, relates to more modern cultural expectations and understandings, where the individual is prioritised in a competitive environment (Mansley, 2013; Spencer, 2016), a cultural factor that will be discussed later. Important for the argument here, the story adds an inflection onto already existing tendencies and ideas that are subsumed into the practice of some participants, thus affecting the ideological organisation of common sense around the mask, and its relevance to protest. *V for Vendetta* has a similar effect around another recurring exertion of pressure, surveillance. It could be argued that the need for, or the basis of, the 'politics of no one', is formulated, produced or reconstructed by whatever forms are taken by surveillance practices.

6.2 Articulating Surveillance

In his interview, David, an activist since the time of the 1980s miner's strikes, describes how he feels that there is a 'time and a place' for use of the mask and it would be unwise to use it at 'ones that aren't related to surveillance, or aren't tied in any way to the mask, or the story behind the mask'. This topic became a frequent recurrence within a number of the interviews, most often in the form of the danger of living in a 'surveillance state':

> "GCHQ [Government Communication Headquarters] impinge on our civil liberties and our privacy and that sort of thing, and this is happening twenty-four seven, every day of the year. Wikileaks did a number on them recently, after all the Snowden NSA stuff. Looking at the sites we visit through Google, and then spying on people trying to report about it. It's hard to believe the extent of it..."

Sam, a member of the Occupy Economics group, introduces the term directly:

> "Another thing that I've not even mentioned but I think is really important, that, in a world that we know is very much dominated by surveillance. The old famous, extremely repeated 'surveillance state'. A reality that we do live under. The mask is a response to that, and in a way it's a very fair response to that, because why should a surveillance state be able to invade, violate, the private space, and get into the heads, the minds, or try to, even though it can't properly…"

The perceptions of a surveillance state seem to be drawn from the political practice of the time, notably around Edward Snowden's [5] whistleblowing and Theresa May's [6] *Communications Data Bill*. Contemporary debates around surveillance centre upon invasion of privacy, on the one hand, which is tied into and relies upon a multitude of

[5] American computer scientist and whistle-blower

[6] Then UK Home Secretary

institutionalised traditions around liberty, democracy and capitalism, and, on the other, the security of national populations, assumptions about globalisation, of security and the role of the state (Ball & Snider, 2013; Renaud, Flowerday, English & Volkamer, 2016). Such themes are clearly evident from media reports collected in the last chapter (Bartlett, 2014; Gabbatt, 2014; Merriman, 2014), and thus enable certain understandings of the mask over others. Indeed, the language used to discuss these issues appears to rely upon themes that bear strong historical traces from other domains, and the *V for Vendetta* story and film seem to mark a specific coming together of these, which is then further utilised by protesters. When talking to Zane, who could be described as a 'career' protester involved since the Road Protests in the 1990s, about the story, he makes clear the potential for society to drift from its current position into something much closer to what is observed within *V for Vendetta*, as well as how interaction with the experiences in other locations makes this perception far stronger:

> "…the scary thing is how close we are to some global tyranny, dictatorship, whatever. You look at Paris, so basically Paris, they declared a state of emergency because of the attacks, and sometimes you never really know who does these attacks, some bomb explodes and you never know, but I think Paris was a genuine attack, but I'm sure there are some other ones that are dodgy. But basically they declared a martial law, any demonstration of more than two people was, for a political purpose, deemed illegal… But you know, 5-10-15 years down the line when the climate situation has got even worse... and you get these terrorist attacks that are done by terrorists or by some branch of government that wants to control things more and then suddenly no protest action allowed, curfew at ten o'clock, and it's *V for Vendetta*. The kind of situation in *V for Vendetta* is supposed to be like 15, 20 years in the future, or more... but yea, twenty years' time when there's twenty million climate refugees trying to get here, across Europe where it's gone a lot more right wing, you know, who knows?"

One can understand this as a particular ideological organisation of the common sense at hand and from the notations available to protesters in a way that resonates with their experience and interaction with the experience of others. This is usefully described as 'narrative fidelity' or 'epistemological commensurability' in framing, but what theories of framing overlook is that this organisation of common sense can be treated as a central factor in the formulation of what becomes available for further articulatory practice. These ideas around surveillance work as the context through which the mask becomes flexible, utilisable and an option within the selective tradition. In short, it is the context, the *structure of feeling*, the level of 'the felt', from which frames are made.

It is thus clear that ideas of surveillance, as with Zane's argument above, work to some extent around themes drawn from fictional sources such as dystopian fiction. Fiction, in this way, functions as a reciprocal interplay between the socio-cultural and the product of the social-cultural, as the activity of people drawing and articulating from their historical context, including previous fiction, shapes the product of this activity, which potentially becomes available once again for shaping further activity. *V for Vendetta*, in this fashion, contains many of the traces found in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which might be considered its precursor, given the themes arising within the stories and with both depicting societies having 'evolved in the wake of an atomic collapse' (Kellner, 2008: 91). This is not simply unmediated reproduction of one story into another, however; as we have stated, in order to resonate in a given context, an artefact or notation must appear relevant to those within that context. Indeed, to Williams (1965: 46), fiction and other forms of creative work[7] are based on the communication of experience in a way that takes into account 'reception and response'; an 'offering of experience which may then be accepted, rejected or ignored'. Not necessarily with the innovatory status often ascribed, or at 'the frontiers of knowledge', the artist's role involves 'the organization of experience' within the range of available potentialities, and in a way that is a personal 'realization' of wider social meanings. Indeed, in practice…

> '…the process of change in art is normally one of extension of meanings, or modification of means. Beyond a certain point, a new meaning could hardly be communicated at all, or perhaps even described; the pressure would simply break up the artist's organization. The 'creative' act, of any artist, is in any case the process of making a meaning active, by communicating an organized experience to others' (Williams, 1965: 49)

Very much in the vein of the selective tradition, and of grounded notions of articulation, creativity and art are the product of labouring upon already existing artefacts, notions, and notations, in a way that will connect with others and communicate experience of some sort or other. This is material too in its apparent adoption of a relatively well-known and documented 1930s Germany set of material and social relations (Lamont, 2011). *V for Vendetta* then articulates, or to an extent translates, these Orwellian ideas into a modern context; for example, by way of notations related to public health epidemics (AIDS for instance) (Kellner, 2008) or the 'corporate-military monster' of the authoritarian military

[7] Indeed, Williams (1961) lambasts Orwell's articulation, particularly his negative portrayals of socialist programmes, due to what he understands as the potential damage from its successful resonation and re-articulation.

Norsefire regime (Combe & Boyle, 2013: 121), to name just two. Contestation is evident here, as different stakeholders compete over the direction of popular culture, and *V for Vendetta*, to those with whom it resonates, demonstrates a successful articulation, in that it becomes usable.

This success in articulation is evident, though not in any complete way, in Sam's argument that the surveillance state is trying to invade the private space of its citizens and, at an extreme level, trying to understand what they think. This is reminiscent of the 'regime terrorism' plot operative within both *V for Vendetta* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, where 'the political system targets its own inhabitants' (Nelson, 2003: 87). This is also evident, to some degree, in Robert's account:

> "I think there are some important similarities in real life with what's in there […] I mean, there's a kind of totalitarian thing, which we don't have but you know things recently have kind of… or they kind of remind me of that, definitely, like I heard we're the most watched country in the world… so that's very similar"

This fear is a major component within the *V for Vendetta* plot where 'the whole population is shown to be constantly under the control of these [video and audio surveillance] apparatuses' (Croci, 2014: 2). In line with Barnard-Wills' (2011) contention that surveillance becomes a 'tool of social control', one of the participants, Richie, argues that 'you definitely see that in *V for Vendetta*… so like the ways that we are controlled in society'. While the genre is one of literature, and thus within the 'realm of the 'fantastic', describing events that typically have not taken place' (Varsam, 2003: 203), it can be understood as the 'realization' of wider cultural notations, as with Williams (1965), and thus potentially becomes real and useable in practical consciousness, as evident here. *V for Vendetta,* then, can certainly be understood as an amalgam of already existing narratives and traces, described by some as 'intertextual' (Carretero-Gonzalez, 2011; Croci, 2014; Kellner, 2008). Kellner (2008) for instance, reserves an entire book for the deconstruction of *V for Vendetta* as a 'cultural pastiche'. One of the 'textual' bases of this pastiche is, of course, the narrative behind Guy Fawkes itself which, within the interviews, was a clear influence on what the mask could mean. This is observable merely in the fact that the vast majority of activists referred to the item as the Guy Fawkes mask, or at least didn't argue when the mask was discussed in this way. This is an observation that demonstrates the taken-for-granted basis of popular culture, as it seemed to take little introspection to call forth the item as such. Interviewees referred to the appropriation of Guy Fawkes as a 'revolutionary […] anti-establishment figure who, like, embodies revolution…' (John), as well as the 'rebellious, revolutionary ideas that have

been conjured up around him and the Gunpowder Plot' (Jason). When asked what the mask invokes for her, environmental protester Michelle answers:

> "Well I suppose… I suppose the obvious one is Guy Fawkes isn't it? So it's a kind of dark revolutionary, erm, story I guess, so it's sort of suggestive of violence and revolution and that sort of thing… perhaps a sort of 'we're prepared to go to extreme lengths for our cause' type thing… but I don't know, that's what occurs to me… I know it's part of that other story as well the *V for Vendetta* thing, so it's associated with that"

The pastiche of *V for Vendetta*, then, certainly incorporates elements of common sense around Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot, and thus gives a specific ideological orientation at the expense of what might be considered other vital aspects to the unfolding of events around 1605. Indeed, the media reports of the protest event analysis surfaced similar elements of common sense, as well as certain authors complaining at the inaccurate articulation involved in their alignment with Occupy (Jenkins, 2011a, 2011b; Jones, 2011), and this is evident, too, within the interviews. As Mike argues:

> "Particularly within my experience in a particular vein of British activism is a strong sense of like history […] and so Guy Fawkes has somehow become a part of that even though it's just basically a story of Catholic elites wanting to kick out the Protestant elites. You know, it's imagined as the people against the king, so peoples' lack of good history is probably part of its power as an image as well. Because if you knew the story of Guy Fawkes, he's not the romantic hero that you want him to be..."

The fusing and incorporation, through clear selectivity, into practice of a certain ideological inflection of the Guy Fawkes narrative, through the *V for Vendetta* story, is a significant determining force upon how the mask is used by specific groups, particularly, as Mike goes on to say, 'a strain of bomb throwing anarchists'. It seems important to argue here that uses of cultural traces such as this are not as simple as a linear movement through ideological articulatory inflection. Carretero-Gonzalez (2011: 201) points out that even the many intentional references in the film are explicitly cross-referential[8]. Moreover, Croci (2014) explains the character of *V* as a 'living pastiche… dwelling in a semiotically-overloaded site of cultural resistance'. To reiterate, however, it is important not to see this in a radically pluralist sense, as the notions from each textual feature that becomes intertextual remains enabled by a certain set of circumstances based on human activity and traces of this activity over time, accumulated within a cultural product such as *V for Vendetta*. For example, the

[8]Within the basement of TV personality and puppet of the regime, Gordon Deitrich, and in the habitat of V himself.

notion of an intrusive and invasive state portrayed in this fiction, by the media and by the participants themselves is possible only because of the way our relationship to one another has developed within variants of liberal thought, where the privacy and autonomy of the individual are perceived as sacred (Crook, 2007; Mindle, 1989).

With this liberal thought as the necessary backdrop, then, and unwittingly explaining the fear that is a central component of the dystopian genre, Altheide (2006: 416) demonstrates the extent of media power, discussing their treatment of terrorist acts as a form of social control, transforming 'terrorism as a tactic to terrorism as a world condition'. Due to this treatment, surveillance is more easily accepted, and becomes part of everyday practice to the extent, to some, that it becomes incorporated, through articulatory repetition, into our everyday landscapes (Gold & Revill, 2003). Indeed, discussing an incident where he suspected an attack, Sam, potentially hypocritically, describes this surveillance as a necessary precaution, or fear, from the state in response to Islamic terrorism, where he suspected a woman in a burka of actually being a man, posing a threat to those around him. Again, the media have a large role to play here, particularly when using dominant tropes such as the 'surveillance society' and 'Big Brother', which are either directly or indirectly reproduced anew in discussion with the interviewees. 'Big Brother' as a trope that is actively reproduced in novel ways is a good example of past practical consciousness being realigned to suit, and further develop, new articulations: with its origins as an all-powerful character and symbol in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, it's reformulation into the modern aesthetic and entertainment culture as the reality television show, *Big Brother*, and it's use by Occupy websites as a title for its news section around state intrusion upon privacy. As above, there is certainly a hint within the interviews that such tropes become a form of 'shorthand' that 'conjure[s] up a rich visual and textual imagery of oppression, control and dehumanization' (Bernard-Wills, 2011: 559). The media thus have a powerful influence over what might be regarded as the hegemonic representation of surveillance, due to their repetition, consistency and command over distribution (Barnard-Wills, 2011: 551). Both the notion that protesters in masks 'could be anyone' and notations of surveillance demonstrate, however, that the media and other parties have to operate around this base of constantly transforming and inherently complicated common sense, which must be mobilised to suit the needs of the mobiliser, as well as the demands of those that would be mobilised.

6.3 Mediation, Spectacle and Identity

The 'mainstream media' provide us with another example of a 'setting of limits' and an 'exertion of pressures', regarding the meaning-making labour involved with the mask. In providing multiple qualitative examples of the language used and the narratives drawn upon and reworked, the protest event analysis attests to this. The 'media' are very frequently emphasised in modern accounts of protest activity, with Occupy seen by some as successful, at least in part, due to its provision of spectacle (Kellner, 2013). Indeed, 'moments of visibility' in the mainstream media are deemed crucial for mobilization and protest duration as they compete with other spectacles and consumptive forms[9] (Cleaver, 1998; Juris, 2005, 2008; Routledge, 1997), many of which are able to draw in larger viewership and/or serve better the concentrated interests of those that own stakes of such dominant media corporations (Doyle, 2002; Croteau & Hoynes, 2013; McChesney, 1999). In a system where readership and viewership define profits, through subscriptions and sponsors, 'audiences' are regarded as 'consumer markets' for products, and news-carrying becomes subject to *entertainment criteria* (Holt & Sanson, 2013; Mirrless, 2013: 209) as part of what participant Will refers to as a 'culture of immediate satisfaction, instant gratification'. Spectacle becomes more and more important for moving the protest, along with its narratives, arguments and objectives, into the public arena as it attempts to meet the demands of capital (D'Arcus, 2006). Marwick (2015) describes this contestation over visibility as the 'attention economy', and we might add that any monopoly, relative or otherwise, over such an economy operates as a form of control over the space within which the contest over 'epistemological closure' takes place (Hall, Lumley & McLennan, 2013; Volosinov, 1986). This clearly puts the advantage in the hands of certain parties, which might be regarded abstractly as 'traditional intellectuals', who are better able to define, distribute, and amplify their hegemonic attempt.

Concentration of media ownership was certainly an important theme to the participants and for some was a central reason for protest. Of the various expressions of this, William, a self-proclaimed 'moderate' protester, provides the most eloquent:

> "Absolutely, the press, the main media, whatever media, I mean they do have this dilemma, they are funded by tax avoiding billionaires […] And they're

[9] If we accept this proposition, it must be stated that the consumptive form must be made to resonate in its production, itself most likely a result of prior consumption; upon its consumption, the need for it is once more (re)produced with variations based on new contexts, and thus previously conditioned human agency.

> exposed to that.. there is I would say a certain conspiracy, that may be too grand a word, it's more like a house of hypnosis... somewhere where you're not going to offend people too much who are responsible for funding you... and at the same time there is interesting stuff out there, people do have feelings of fairness"

The importance of attracting the media, via moments of visibility, of 'titillation' (Serena), is also discussed in depth. For example, photographer Greg, states:

> "…you've got to think about what you look like, like for the press […] it's important if you want to get noticed. […] In my opinion the only reason Occupy got to where it did was because of its organisation and that it looked the part, like, it looked good"

Similarly, to William,

> "…so yea, it's a kind of game that's got to be played with various attractions and things that to some extent we've got to seem interesting and different because only under that guise are we going to get the airplay time…" (William)

The mask acts, it can be argued, as one of these 'various attractions', a sensational moment of visibility – what DeLuca (1999) and DeLuca, Lawson and Sun (2012) define as an 'image event' – that adheres to the demands of the profit-seeking entertainment and news industry, something that is perhaps propped up by the mask's observability in other entertainment forms. The media's utilisation of particular consumptive forms, and the need to play into them for 'airplay time', suggests something about the socio-cultural and economic complex of the epoch. This is perhaps not too far from Giroux's (2016: 2) contention that the 'citizen has been reduced to a consumer' whose 'needs have become utterly privatised', a subjectivity, in the words of Vander Schee and Kline (2013: 566), 'constituted by consumption' – a point that I will return to at the end of this chapter. In this case, Ferree (2003: 311) is right to suggest that 'achieving representation in the media is a prerequisite to reaching a popular constituency with a movement message'. The mask is enough of a consumptive vehicle to thrive in such conditions, particularly coming from, at least in part, a Hollywood 'blockbuster'. There is therefore the danger in having to 'play their game' (Tom) – the game, that is, of the dominant mode of understanding – of reinforcing it, as attempts to destabilise or demonstrate an emergent or alternative mode become incorporated as part of the spectacle.

This incorporation renders the hegemonic mode, if it is in fact hegemonic, safe from the attacks of alternatives, and can be seen as the context within which 'organic intellectuals' must work. Indeed, we must make this argument in terms of the activity of people: it is how *people* articulate these on media outlets, the decisions made throughout the chain of

communication, that makes this a possibility, and is thus through 'cultural leadership' and not simply a system, or a system of thought functioning 'idealistically', on its own or mere 'ideological compulsion' (Hall, 1982: 81). Of course, this is also a system that is tied together with contradictory components, leaving openings for resistance through re-articulation and counter-selective activity. These contradictions are demonstrated effectively by Mike who claims that the apparent popularity of the mask is exaggerated by the media's desire for the sensational, creating a 'very powerful illusion':

> "…so even if like there'd been a few masks at a demo, the media would disproportionately show photos of the mask. The media was creating an aesthetic event in Occupy… One of the most important things that linked Wall Street and London, and the various locations that these things were happening, was images, things looking the same and the media creating that impression, because it was appealing. It made sense to them to amplify the sense of this was a common movement"

Both the success of the Occupy movement and the popularity of the mask, observable and therefore available and accentuated as an option, can be understood at least to some extent as a result of this media practice. The ability to forge a 'we', or a collective identity, was thus enhanced significantly by the consumptive demand for spectacle. This crossover, it seems, between the consumptive demand of the sensational, and thus of the spectacle, in the media and the building of an identity is observable too in more modern forms of communicative technology.

As a way of understanding the mask within movements, numerous interviewees point to the role of social media and how its use as a conduit for identification, enabling, and making desirable, practices of impression management. The mask is thus seen as important for its capacity to build a sense of collective identity when other avenues for doing so are no longer available. The former thesis, employment of the mask for building a sense of collective identity, is quite clear in the interviews:

> "…so it seems like a way of people connecting with the bigger movement… you know, you have the 99% thing and then there's things like that… I imagine it's making that connection… […] So like if you were at one of the smaller camps it would be clear" (Will)

> "It's like a solidarity thing, it's like saying yea we're all in this together and you can see who we are, there are loads of us' […] 'Well, it's like you're all part of this… erm… well you just feel part something bigger don't you…" (Harry)

> "…it had a sort of cross-cultural imagery, so I think it helped to make the movement more communicable, so it was useful in that sense" (Marie)

> "It provided a huge sense of morale because it meant that when something was going shitty in your corner of the Occupy movement successes elsewhere could be in some way kind of like felt... as part of a broader… as our successes" (Mike)

The latter point, that traditional avenues of building a sense of togetherness and unity have broken down, is also clear from the interviewees explanations of protest and of Occupy:

> "It's also about reclaiming public space… and reclaiming a community space where you could meet and interact without a cost. I mean even now the march has gone even further on you know the privatisation of our communal spaces, of our... so many community centres, libraries, spaces being sold off" (Zane)

And as David claims, this is what Occupy was about:

> "…it [Occupy] was based on the idea that everybody mucks in, it was old school community living but with, like, a twist of modern technology, you know. Extremely friendly, extremely enjoyable, extremely efficient... when everyone is doing their bit, anyway […] so that's what you want people to see, you want to show them how much better things are when you do them together"

It is the 'twist of modern technology' that we might therefore understand as filling this substantial gap. A change in the social relations within which people produce both materially and culturally, in coterminous fashion, enforces a necessary adaptation within the social relations to accommodate resistance. This resounds with Bennett and Segerberg's (2012) explanation of the importance of 'personal action frames' for mobilization in protest, where the use of 'simple political messages', slogans and images bypass the need for slowly diffusing, more traditional, action claims, such as labour movements and trade union activity. Through the medium of social media, Bennett and Segerberg (2012: 742) argue that much of Occupy's success was based on slogans such as 'we are the 99%' that 'quickly travelled the world via personal stories and images shared on social networks such as Tumblr, Twitter and Facebook'. This demonstrates a move from what, in framing terms, might be regarded as fairly comprehensive packaged frames of meaning that enable collective definitions of the situation and thus collective action (Noakes & Johnson, 2005), to something more fitting with the 'digitally mediated' contemporary world (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). Once again, the contextual basis of contemporary society springs to the fore. Gerbaudo (2014: 266-268) critiques the overly 'technical discussions' involved in Bennett and Segerberg's thesis, claiming that it is rooted too firmly in a 'methodological individualism' far too close to rational choice. However, fitting with the claims of numerous reports in the last chapter, with the mask as an 'icon' (Crowcroft, 2015), a 'talisman' (O'Brien, 2011), and a 'symbol' (Alhajal, 2011), he specifically isolates the Guy Fawkes mask as a relevant example. Such images, he agrees, allow a way of 'claiming participation in a

'we'', when, as above, traditional roots of doing so have in various ways eroded (Gerbaudo, 2014: 268).

The specifics of these interviewees' experiences, and how these lead to a unique negotiation under the exerted pressures of wider structures, to an extent move us beyond the often abstract and at times totalising notions within social movement theory. Examples of this include, from new social movement theorising, the 'information age' (Melucci, 1996) and the 'networked society' (Castells, 2011) which have the potential to reposition us awkwardly away from the substance of the experiential. As a metaphor, the notion of network does go some way to 'underline that the possibilities for connectivity have dramatically increased' (Svensson, 2014: 19). Technological and media 'convergence' (Meikle & Young, 2012), exhibited to the extreme in mobile communication technology, in certain parts of the world allow one to interact with others despite distance, to research information, to generate information content, to capture, upload and download sound, images and video, as well as many other things (Goggin & Wilken, 2012; Goggin, 2013; Ling, 2012). However, it must be remembered that though these technologies make access to information easier and also bring about a proliferation of productive techniques, they remain worked, or laboured, by fleshy, embodied human beings using them to certain ends, with certain limitations based on what has gone before. Previous technologies, or traces of them, remain predominant within newer technologies, as Williams (2005: 55) points out, forms of social communication such as reading and writing, verbal and body language are 'early in human history, but their centrality does not diminish during the remarkable subsequent stages in which, by conscious social labour, men developed means of communication which depended on the use or transformation of non-human material'. Later forms, then, are developed through social labour, in relation to older forms, and retain their material and social roots. An example of this is provided by Etter and Vestergard (2015), using frame analysis in their analysis of the 'Nestle Kit Kat crisis'[10], who argue that the frames employed by the news media maintain a large amount of control over the discursive negotiations on social media such as Facebook. It is arguable, then, that social media utilisation relies heavily upon cultural resources, such as the mask, from elsewhere, and so therefore does the building of identity through such channels. The use of social media for formulating a sense of identity is something the interviewees pick up on, though not only for reasons strictly related to building a collective identity in the name of social movement outcomes.

[10]The deaths of Orang-utans due to deforestation for Palm Oil used in Nestle chocolate

The need to present oneself in a certain way to one's peers more generally, including away from social movement interests, brings us back to a consideration of the dominant norms in culture, and how these impact upon how we relate to ourselves and others. From the interviewees it was largely a sense of resistance to these dominant norms that sparked their discussion. A powerful representation of this comes from Robert when recounting a story about a woman on a train posing into her camera phone, and how this is brought about by the advent of social media:

> "…so she's clearly like uploading all of these to Instagram and then people are like 'oh you're so beautiful honey' [mock voice] which makes her do it again and… like I think this is what kids are like these days aren't they, just posey and I mean […] narcissistic, it's horrible, have some humility for fuck's sake"

More relevant here, and with a similar level of distaste, another participant, Mike[11], discusses seeing a young man climb a lamppost at Occupy to have his picture taken while wearing the mask, an image that he speculated would most likely become a profile picture on some social media platform. The mask seems to become, then, not only a way of identifying with others in order to unify and contest, but also a way of foregrounding a certain image that one wants others to appreciate and be convinced by. In relation to this, Van Dijck (2013) discusses[12] the development of these social media platforms, as they were transformed from databases of personal information to 'tools for (personal) storytelling and narrative self-presentation', with an underpinning movement from 'connectedness' to 'connectivity'. Using Goffman's notion of self-presentation, van Dijck (2013: 202) discusses the role of social media, and practices of 'friending', 'liking', 'connecting' and 'following', in both unconsciously and consciously expressing a sense of self, with the latter becoming more prevalent 'as people's presence and popularity' become 'increasingly measured by their online manifestation'. While this is a thesis that would certainly require further scrutiny, a relatively large number of the respondents raised this point, or something very similar, against those that use the Guy Fawkes mask:

> "…people love their picture being taken don't they, so if it's like you're in the film in that moment, then yea, I guess that's part of the appeal. The whole thing about having your picture taken in the mask is crazy! […] like, it's hardly a selfie is it?" (John)

> "Erm.. and then, because in Occupy London there was a kind of self-conscious Anonymous UK collective there, they all wore masks, all bloody day. They were

[11] A story from personal correspondence

[12] Van Dijck discusses the functionalities of varying interfaces, a discussion that could hold even more utility were these linked to their social and material backdrop.

> at every action having their photo opportunities, erm, they were always in the most picturesque spot all lined up with their faces on...” (Mike)
>
> “…like the Anonymous UK lot it seemed the opposite to that, they were so smug a lot of the time about this like link with Anonymous […] They're posers… well no not all of them… like I think some of them did genuinely believe it stood for something or whatever, but so many of them just seemed to love posing for pictures wearing the mask, and others who were wearing it are like posing for pictures with it on top of their head so that people know it's them in the picture.. I think it's like an image thing, or like an identity thing, for a lot of people, I'm sure not everyone, but a lot of people I've seen or I know that wear the mask, I'm sure it's an image thing as much as anything else… but there is a bigger point to protest than turning up to build up this like... to build up this profile of yourself that you can show to all your mates on Twitter or Facebook 'look at me, I protest, I make a difference’” (Robert)

As a response to what John refers to as a ‘selfie’, or a ‘selfie culture’, these interviewees felt passionately that the individual desire for making protest a social media event and an outlet for self-expression and definition was problematic, similar perhaps to the critique of superficiality in new social movements. This more recent use of new media technologies can be seen as an accommodation of this changing relationship between individuals and the rest of society, and social media sites such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook are a product of activity within these relations, becoming sites of further (*re*)production.

6.4 Cultural Prerequisites and Determinants

Media forms, then, have a clear influence on the use of the mask, whether this is in direct opposition to the monopolisation of airplay time, or in the apparent necessity of using strategies that work on this basis, and submitting to the demands and desires of spectacle. The mask, in its link to entertainment culture in the first place, certainly provides the latter. It also proves a useful resource by which activists, in a culture – or *anlage*[13] – of self-presentation and expression, can formulate an easy association with protest. This is, once more, further impressed by the link with the *V for Vendetta* film, which is acknowledged for its spectacularisation of such practices. The underlying performance of identity and impression management discussed here, pulling upon resources of this kind, certainly chimes with current literature on the topic around image utilisation and the seeking of social acceptance[14] (Farquhar, 2012; Siibak, 2009; Strano, 2008). Such a cultural inflection

[13]That concurrent collection or depository of needs and capacities, indicated by Marx in *The German Ideology*.

[14]Sharing the conceptual heritage of Goffman, and of George Herbert Mead, impression management and framing, while useful in many ways, share the difficulty of placing a context into a wider context.

warrants a deeper look into the *mode of being* with which these activists are contending – the specific ideological direction of the diverse traces of common sense. It is in the entrenched and widely penetrating historical and cultural backdrop – complicated and full of contradiction though it is – that, in this final section, we can better locate the themes upon which we have so far focussed. Activists, taking a direct interest in their surroundings, are perhaps well-suited to understanding this cultural backdrop, and its solution, the structure of feeling, in which it seems to manifest. Indeed, most intimated at a particular ideological organisation of common sense that they saw as the oppositional force to overcome. In line with the general claims about the oppressive organisation of capitalism arising from the protest event analysis of Chapter Five[15], some described this as 'advanced capitalism', the subjective, cultural or personal impact of which Sam sums up:

> "…a world which is rushing around on a sort of capitalist treadmill, and that's one way I would sort of see this, it's sort of rushing a bit insanely, a bit too fast, too competitively, too selfishly, on a, you know, on a bit of a mad, you know, whirly-gig. It's actually quite hard to work out how you as a... I think as a really effective individual can link in to that…" (Sam)

Others spoke directly of a pervasive form of *neoliberalism*, such as Marie who argued that despite the gains made in the student movement, 'neoliberalism has sort of reversed a lot of the successes'. Ryan, too, describes his perception of neoliberalism:

> "Mainly it's like a worldwide situation where money rules and people lose, or certain people with money do very well anyway… you can see the NHS being torn apart, erm… wars going on because someone somewhere will make a profit on the guns and shit being sold to both sides"

David, discussing the role of Occupy, points to a specific conjuncture in recent history marking a shifting towards this neoliberal mode:

> "…it's all that combined that's what Occupy was about. There's more than that, there's so much, it runs so deep… but it's inherently neoliberal, you know… It's the policies brought about by Thatcher, the Trilateral Commission, the IMF, Blair and New Labour, all of that that destroys peoples' homes, lives, relationships…"

David is discussing here what Hall (2011: 705) describes as the 'unresolved rupture' of the Thatcher and Reagan governments of the 1980s, which incorporated many into the hegemonic norms of neoliberal thought. In academic terms, there are potential problems

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Impression management thus conceptualises power within interaction, but not the power relations that make up what Mead (1934) regards as the 'generalised other'.

[15]Something that was particularly cited as a protest claim within the Million Mask March.

with such a generalisation of 'neoliberalism' (c.f. Barnett, 2010; Venugopal, 2015), which a contextual, historical account would need to be the first to identify, but here it is used by the interviewee's themselves as a resource to draw upon and rearticulate.

Importantly, the mode described here is far more than simply who is the recipient of its outcomes and returns. It is a way of understanding one's self and thus one's relation to others: a mode of identification and of communication (Wrenn, 2014), developing out of the material and social fabric of society. One might argue that the principles of neoliberalism, then, occupy the cultural and private domains of civil society. Tom, when discussing what he sees as a necessary response to 'capitalism in general', sums up his perception of the current manifestation of this, where people need to…

> "…realise that we're all part of a society, not just individuals out for what they can get for themselves. That's the pervasive part of capitalism, you know, this idea that we are these individual units that, that… only need to look after ourselves and the rest will somehow follow"

Tom appears to be referring here to a specific form of individualisation[16] (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2007; Fine, 2002), where society comes to mean 'an association of individuals' (Siedentop, 2014: 7). This is, to some, seen as the central theme of liberalism, emphasising the importance of protecting 'individual liberty without dictating the goals and purposes espoused by free people' (Christman, 1991: 343). It is only with this in mind – the liberal backdrop described earlier – that we can begin to make better sense of the activists' descriptions of surveillance, making liberalism a cultural constraint upon any use of the mask. While variants of political liberalism have always regarded certain individual rights as inalienable – such as the right to 'life, liberty, security and happiness' (Bobbio, 2005: 5) – it was in the neoliberal ideas of von Mises, Hayek and Friedman that the individual came to be regarded as the ever-calculating, rational 'economic agent' (Dardot & Laval, 2013). In this setting, state or governmental intervention was considered destructive to logical calculation by the individual, and thus ineffective economic practice. To avoid this, state action should therefore be limited to instituting 'private property rights, free markets and free trade' to incentivise competition and 'entrepreneurial' activity in the individual (Harvey, 2005: 2). The enterprising individual, or the 'entrepreneurial self' (Brockling, 2016), according to Martilla

[16]This is, of course, nothing new. In fact, as stated in Chapter Three, Marx critiques this in capitalism, on the basis of the political economists such as Smith and Ricardo that treated the individual as the initial unit of investigation, forgetting that 'the human being is in the most literal sense a political animal, not merely a gregarious animal, but an animal which can individuate itself only in the midst of society' (1993: 84)

(2013: 3), 'has become a general role model for the way social subjects should conduct themselves in order to maximize their own social security and employability'. This is evident to David who suggests that, as part of its resistance to the dominant neoliberal culture, Occupy was 'pitching for something far more collective that doesn't celebrate or… glorify one person'. It is the liberal mode of thought which he pulls up for critique here, arguing that, yes 'we should all be free, but what if one person's freedom eats at another's?' (David). This manifests, to some of these activists, in a *selfie culture*: a dimension of a social mode of being that represents an increasing level of narcissism or grandiosity as, with the isolating, competitive, consumerist and commodified basis of society (Wearing, McDonald & Wearing, 2013), there is an encouraged 'denial of dependence and interdependence' (Layton, 2014: 463).

The internet and social media are an example of the material dimensions of production corresponding with this. The internet has become an expansive productive sphere with the advent of user-generated content, and thus the proliferation of productive means, where those that participate generate content, communicate with others, and build online communities (Terranova, 2004). This sphere can therefore be understood as a form of digitally creative labour, as through this activity corporate entities are able to piece together an impression of what might be considered relevant as a product (Arvidsson, 2006; Arvidsson & Colleoni, 2012; Hebblewhite & Henning, 2012). The material grounds and the social relations within which they are able to function are thus clearly important here, as the everyday cultural use of the internet in many societies is now regarded as the norm, as 'connectivity' (van Dijck, 2013) becomes a crucial space for the organisation of common sense, making certain practices more opportune. The self-presentation involved in one's use of the mask on social media channels can quite clearly be related to this. We can obviously question whether this utilisation of protest for expression of self is anything new, or whether technology simply makes it more prominent or visible, but, even so, the observability of it is something that these respondents find inappropriate. This will be discussed further in Chapter Seven. For now, we can argue that how the mask can be used, the meaning that can be made, is dependent upon this technological backdrop and the social relations that produce it and are produced by it. This is quite apparently not *infinitely* flexible then, though it may well seem so given that our limits of what perceptibly could be are prescribed by this, and thus everything we can think of may seem to be 'infinite'.

6.5 Summary

This chapter, following on from a demonstration of the extent of the mask's diffusion, has provided an empirical account of why the mask was perceived as an option within one specific movement, Occupy London. Numerous themes emerge as answer to the question posed – the question pertaining to the conditions that make the practice of adopting the mask a possibility or a potentiality – all related in some way to wider cultural currents. These are also deeply entangled. The anonymity discussed here, for example, relies upon the contextual measures taken by the police, as does the strategic propensity for uniform. The specific cultural values inscribed into law, which can be considered hegemonic due to their being locked into state power are clearly observable, and the emergent practices of the activists develop in relation to these. It is argued here that those wearing the mask are, in part, doing so collectively to further anonymise themselves, perhaps due to the increased risk of surveillance, detention and reprisal. In this sense, with framing and the rational action models it supplements, use of the mask *can be* considered *instrumental,* a process of cost-benefit calculation. However, the rationality necessarily preceding this calculation is very much a cultural concern, and is constituted, in part, by cultural factors. By cultural, as in Chapter Three, and avoiding any overly ideational understanding, I am referring to a socially and materially produced sense of culture over time, and that which 'rings true' with the social and material experience of real, active people, who find themselves embedded within particular positions based on the cost-benefit – i.e. *interest-laden* – activity of others.

The activists here are, it seems, particularly concerned about surveillance in an era of enhanced surveillance technology, which is itself tied into and reinforced by numerous other issues pertaining to liberalism, globalisation and cultural and religious clashes. To a certain degree, the articulatory resources drawn upon to explicate such concerns appear to depend on cultural tropes, such as those from the Guy Fawkes narrative and other dystopian forms, often propagated by the media but frequently established within fiction. Despite their fictional basis, they are at least in part a product of experienced material relations, as evidenced to some extent by *V for Vendetta*'s leaning upon the social and material relations of 1930s Germany and, one might argue, Orwell's dystopian portrayal of communism and the Soviet Union. This foregrounds the role of fiction, art and other 'creative' forms in their (*re*)production of particular norms over time. Other cultural notations such as the 'politics of no-one', and its pre-requisite concept of 'unity', emerge in certain works of fiction, and the documented experience of other protests, and appear to be an important reason for the mask's availability and popularity.

The expansive role of the media in impacting upon what is perceived as dominant was also important to the interviewees. By rendering some account and a certain use of language as closer to 'normal', the media exact a powerful influence over the practical consciousness of its audience. Importantly though, they too have to work within the confines of what is available, and what is likely to resonate with their audience. The mainstream media, however, are heavily embedded within the dominant system, with far more resources as a result, and therefore have more influence. The media have other immediate and observable properties that form in some way the determined environment within which the mask can operate. For example, the reaction to media censorship within dystopian fiction such as *V for Vendetta* is mirrored in discussion with the activists here, where such control is seen as pervasive and a form of social control. The mask, then, makes sense as the trope of censorship is borrowed for new attempts at successful and resonating articulation. Perhaps paradoxically, the media become a vital space for diffusing movement claims, aims and pressures. Generally regarded by the activists as an entertainment machine aiming for sizeable revenue, the media requires that protest fit within a range of consumptive forms that will increase audience figures and financial return. The spectacle that the mask brings, particularly one might argue with its basis already in the entertainment industry, allows for such 'titilation', and becomes a useful resource for the expansion and diffusion of movements. With this diffusion, particularly through the previously unavailable channels of social media, comes the basis for incorporating elements of the movement into one's identity. The wider contextual changes, which correspond with developments in these technologies, also correspond with a certain erosion of others means or channels of identification. In a set of circumstances where the individual is emphasised over the collective, with a considerable level of fragmentation brought about by the proliferation of sources of identification, the mask becomes a superficial but more easily diffused symbol to unite behind.

This context, then, is all-important, and demonstrates not an 'infinite flexibility' in the mask's meaning, but a delimited set of constraints. It must be understood, however, as a context made up of material structures and practice that allow some resonation of the mask within the practical consciousness of activists. The level of complexity, and the historical basis upon which this context rests, demonstrates the importance of this level of analytical depth when it comes to social movement analysis. The ideological organisation of diverse and often contradictory common sense notations here is integral in making available certain forms over others, and the mask is a clear example of this. However, to demonstrate a greater

level of complexity in analysis, while these exertions of pressure within particular limits mark the mask as available for some, the activists interviewed here, despite understanding the reasons given above for the mask's use, appear generally to think it inappropriate and counter-productive to the broader aims of Occupy. The following chapter will thus look to better understand how the activists place the mask within wider protest, along with the role it has in forming counter-hegemonic relations, in line with what they understood as the task of Occupy. Such an endeavour will demonstrate further layers of active contestation over the range of potentialities.

Chapter Seven. The Mask, Resonation and Counter-Hegemony

In discussing the interviewees' understanding of why one might adopt the Guy Fawkes mask, Chapter Six demonstrated the contextual and historical basis of the mask's practical availability within Occupy London. In doing so, it moved beyond claims of 'infinite flexibility' in the mask's meaning. It also showed that even when its employment was instrumental, this was based on cultural preconditions, built over time through human experience and activity embedded within social and material relations. I ended the chapter, however, by suggesting that the complexity of such an account does not stop at the historically produced context – for example, with what the interviewees described as advanced capitalism or neoliberalism – but continues within the context as actors draw upon these traces and actively produce or reproduce once again. This chapter will therefore focus upon the contestation of this activity, and, adopting more explicitly the framework outlined in Chapter Three, will answer my third research question: how can we better understand this practice – of employing the Guy Fawkes mask in protest – with the theoretical framework outlined within this project? Looking to such conflict over meaning, this chapter demonstrates a further level of complexity as competing interest-based intentions, or value judgements, seek to impose certain meanings based on experiential development and the use of alternative traces. There is therefore *even less* flexibility in what the mask is able to mean. I use Gramsci's theory of hegemony here to better conceptualise this process. Three vague interrelated and guiding themes from the interviews will demonstrate this, all of which are centred on the inability of the mask to connect with potential 'recruits', and thus with the underpinning importance of *legitimacy*: the role of 'fiction', the impact of violence, and the importance of garnering trust and accountability. These are understood in relation to the multifaceted theoretical framework of hegemony, and processes of cultural resonance and activists' attempts to appeal to the common sense of others.

7.1 Compatible Tactics: Movement Goals and Counter-Hegemony

The reasons provided in the last chapter demonstrate the mask as potentially available for employment, but the interviews foreground a contested view of the mask's desirability, where some liked it in practice, others weren't particularly bothered, others regarded it strictly as situation specific, and still others were suspicious of those that would become involved in such a practice:

> "I mean personally for me anyway. But then rationally too, I don't think it always makes sense to wear it, in fact it's rarely a good idea. [pause] So, err, for

example, I've used mine at a few marches, you know, against state intrusion on privacy, that sort of thing. But I wouldn't wear it at other protests. There's a time and a place" (David)

"So I really like him [Alan Moore], and I really like the like story, the *V for Vendetta* story, as like a piece of artwork, but in terms of the erm, how it works with Occupy, and my my specific area that I tend to focus on which was press, it was problematic..." (Kate)

"Erm... well, like tattoos it's not for me, but... erm... it's fine for other people. I understand their feeling... I think I do... and their motivations..." (William)

"Well to be honest, I get a bit annoyed not being able to see faces, especially when I want to talk to someone… it gets a bit frustrating… other than that I have no problem with it., but I wouldn't wear one, no" (Will)

Though there are clearly mixed feelings around the mask's employment, almost all respondents made comments regarding the need for tactical nous. Numerous activists recited the need to be clever about protest, especially because those they regard as opponents are far better placed and well resourced:

'The enemy is clever and if you're not clever about what you do then you've got bugger all chance of… whatever it is you want to do, be successful or whatever. It's not enough to just turn up and be like 'waah waah waah, I'm not happy about this, or I'm not happy about that', you know, you have to have a strategy. And they… they're not just clever, they're resource heavy too. They've got money, contacts, control, all that. So what's one protester whinging… what chance has one upset little activist got against that? You have to be smart.' (David)

This concern for resources is echoed by Michelle when discussing environmental movements, claiming that 'it's the [climate change] deniers that have the cashflow'. It demonstrates an immediate impact of the conjunctural material relations on perception of opportunities, and thus a need to choose appropriate tactics to overcome this. From here, we might ask whether or not, and *why*, employment of the mask is a clever tactical move, and in relation to which particular 'court of appeal'. This is, once again, looking to understand an embedded part in relation to its context.

Extant social movement theory enables some understanding of how we comprehend what is to count as an appropriate or legitimate tactic. Indeed, this relies on what comes to be defined as success within protest spheres, something which social movement theory has had a lot to say about. For example, resource mobilization theorists focused more heavily on financial and material gains, as well as, with others, the 'attainment of legitimacy' or the elevation to political power (McCarthy & Zald, 1977: 1222; Gamson, 1990). Those looking

into new social movements and in the New Left, on the other hand, describe the importance of 'direct personal involvement in political action, self-help, personal change, and the creation of new identities and solidarities' (Cohen , 1985: 689). Frame theory looks less to the ends and more to the means by which whatever is regarded as success is achieved, for example Polletta and Jasper (2001: 295) argue that 'how successfully groups frame their identities for the public thus affects their ability to recruit members and supporters, gain a public hearing, make alliances with other groups, and defuse opposition'. Of course, one of our critiques here is the perhaps inappropriate attempts at fusion between these theories, where outcomes, goals or success are perhaps taken as one variant, such as resource mobilization, provides the ends while another, such as framing, provides the means. In the previous chapter, similarly to Melucci's notion of collective identity, I also demonstrated the cultural prescription of the rationality to which and from which such tactics are directed. The interviewees here appear to be most concerned with the mobilization and education of others, but their comments implicate aspects of these other arguments:

> "…it's about spreading awareness… if you can educate people, and then those people educate other people, you can build a movement, and that's when you get proper resistance. So with most protests it's like just spreading the word and educating people with the facts" (Harry)

> "…you want to spur people on so they go back and get involved in their local environmental networks, I think that's where you see the real benefits of the marches, in that people come along and realise they might not be alone in worrying about these things... and they see that it's not just about hippies and drug taking and whatever, it's actually about something more than that, real people with real concerns about what's going to happen to other real people who don't have a voice like we do..." (Michelle)

Both Harry and Michelle provide a sense that subsuming others into the collective, developing a sense of collective identity, a conception of 'we', is an important step in preparing for some form of change. As with Harry's argument, this process works by the transmission of understanding, what we might regard as education, particularly, within Occupy, around such issues as housing, inadequate wages, the economic crisis perceived as the fault of irresponsible and greedy bankers, environmental issues, unemployment, and numerous other interrelated themes. Such intellectual persuasion, we could argue, can be regarded as the pursuit of a counter-hegemony, forming, over time, an historic bloc with the enlarged capacity to transform the social relations of production with the assurgent majority, particularly in a system of democratic ideals (Gramsci, 1971). Other accounts of social movements, particularly across different areas, also discuss this form of 'coalition-

building' (c.f. Corrigall-Brown & Meyer, 2010; Nella van Dyke & McCammon, 2010), including in relation to diffusion of particular tactics and ideas (Beamish & Luebbers, 2009)

This is not to say that the interviewees didn't provide other goals of protest. In fact, some interviewees felt it was difficult to say what the goals of Occupy were, especially given the diversity of groups present:

> "I mean… what goals can you have? People were angry with the general state of things, and they were there to make that apparent… so that is a goal, isn't it? It's always going to be difficult to get it into like, you know, actual goals and stuff when you have so many different people getting involved. That kind of attitude annoys me a bit, because it's like there's no point to you and what you're doing if you can't say it in ten seconds" (Ryan)

This certainly corresponds with previous movements from which Occupy may be said to have developed. For example, the alter-globalisation movement is considered a bastion against the destructive effects of neoliberal principles in globalisation, but largely at the local level, and, to Pleyers (2010), is considered both a defence of vulnerable subjectivities and creativities and a space for claiming and diffusing alternatives. From this one can assume a diverse multitude of subject positions within the Occupy movement. Bray (2013) certainly points to hints of anarchism within the movement, evidenced by the horizontalism at play within its organisation, and thus the openness seemingly afforded by this. That the people attending Occupy London were angry, however, and already attending the protest, suggests that they were already aware to some degree of the various issues Occupy sought to confront. To mobilise would therefore still mean to create such awareness and anger in others, most likely through the same process of education and intellectual persuasion. It is useful here, then, to treat such a project as one of definitional or epistemological closure with regards to the 'reality' of the situation; a project that depends on the ability to resonate with the experience of others.

Alternatively, some held what seemed to be more of a rigid position on the relationship with other groups, regarding them as opposition or as the 'enemy' (Harry), or at least their narrative was couched in these terms. Despite this, the need to appeal to others comes across as the central aim of protest, beyond, as with the resource mobilization thesis, the immediate transformation of the political system. As Will points out, and in keeping with our analysis in the previous chapter, the cultural preconditions determine the range of potentialities available:

> "In a culture of immediate satisfaction, instant gratification, of course people are going to be looking for results. Who doesn't want to arrive back at

> headquarters after an event to turn on the TV and find that they've decided to put all the money into renewables, sacked the cabinet and… I don't know, shut Guantanamo…. But these things leave a mark, an imprint if you like… they lead people to take further action and gather all sorts of people along the way"

It is thus a mode of action with indirect results over time that the majority of the activists are generally pressing for. In order for this to happen, however, to get people onside, enabling them to add their weight to the collective effort they have to be enticed in or at least be persuaded that alternatives are worth listening to. As the 'fact of hegemony presupposes that account be taken of the interests and the tendencies of the groups over which hegemony is exercised' (Gramsci, 1971: 161), activists must work to undermine any hegemony in place and replace it with an understanding of their own, taking into the experiential needs of others; that is of course if the aim is, as it seems here, to foreground a counter-hegemony, a different cultural understanding with different material outcomes and beneficiaries. Social movements were widely seen then, though not necessarily in these terms, as a process of undermining, or picking apart, the particular ideological organisation of common sense, and through this – even tangled up *within* it – introducing an alternative ideological organisation in the cracks that emerge or have emerged. An interesting and productive discussion is clearly enabled here via Gramsci's complicated notion of hegemony. The respondents are certainly concerned with the impact the mask has on their 'war of position', or, more broadly, on their ability to construct an effective counter-hegemony within the confines of civil society. We can formulate the argument, and will do so in the following three sections, using the notion of *variable* or *relative distance*. That is, that the Guy Fawkes mask's distance from the dominant norms of the conjuncture or era appears to make it more of a hindrance than a boon. A central implication of this distance is a loss of accountability and trust from the very people the activists are trying to 'educate' and mobilise.

7.2 Accountability, Trust and Resonance

The cultural value of accountability along with the cultural narrative that supports it, of the need to 'stand up and be counted', was very much evident within the interviews. This came across in varying degrees:

> "…people are free in my opinion to do what they want, you know if they're going to use it and do harm, that's different, but erm... yea... you know it's kind of trendy I suppose, but it wasn't really my thing, I didn't like... I'm happy to show my face in the name of love you know, because I'm proud of putting my face to my ideas" (Serena)

> "…[we] were quite happy to be there, like as us, as ourselves, like to have a shout and try to do something, we didn't need some story and some mask to do that" (Robert)
>
> "There's a time and a place. Most of the time I think you need to stand up and be counted, not being covered up" (David)

There was thus a sense from the majority of the interviewees that showing one's face, and, by extension, matching one's face to one's claims, was an important part of gaining acceptance. The use of a mask can, indeed, be considered against a deep set of values, or residual norms, that have developed over time. From the political values developing, in the West, out of the Enlightenment around democracy, came a normalisation of transparency, as secrets were regarded as synonymous with corruption (Israel, 2011; Smelser, 1962). The mask becomes a 'means of transgressing boundaries', and a form of 'inversion' (Stewart, 1984), against the process of being 'categorised by the state' (Ruiz, 2013: 264). To perceive it in such a way is possible because of the shaping or modifying of practical consciousness by the residue of these developments that are invested in institutions and traditions. Indeed, the face has taken profound physiognomic importance in our culture – as evidenced by the 'pride' alluded to by Serena above – signifying the 'limit or border zone dividing outside from inside', producing a surface-depth dichotomy (Calefato, 2004; Engle, 2007: 400-401; Rushton, 2002). The mask renders this physiognomic relationship unobservable, and therefore becomes associated with a lack of transparency, and potentially pretentious, insincere and immoral (Napier, 1992).

This last point rings true it seems with the interviewees. For example, David makes the comparison between Anonymous and Occupy and brings up the importance of trust:

> "I mean I trust, and I think the public should trust Occupy and what they want to achieve, I would say that I was there and involved. But I don't trust and definitely don't think the public should trust Anonymous. They're too unaccountable. Their whole thing is about accountability, but who are they accountable to? I really don't like it. I mean they've done some good things, the DDOS attacks on Scientology and other pretty dodgy things, but so many of these things are really complicated… what happens when they misunderstand something and get it wrong? What happens then? Who are they accountable to?"

Jason, too, directly discusses the mask in relation to transparency and other forms of headwear:

> "Wearing a mask is hiding something, it's stopping yourself from being transparent, it's playing their game, you see. I don't think that's a good idea

> myself, I think you want to… you want to make sure you're different from those people you're trying to take on or attack' [..]…you're hiding stuff… and the public are going to trust you, well, probably less than they trust some c*** like Boris Johnson… if you're wearing one, I mean... people like to be able to see each other's face, well most people I'm sure, and it is like a trust thing, we feel fucking uncomfortable when someone is hiding themselves from us, so how is that going to help, I mean all the fuss over hijabs or burkas […] There's an idea, let's alienate all these people we are supposed to be connecting with…"

As indicated by Jason, the range of possibilities are confined to a large extent by those residual norms within a specific historical location, and in this case by a certain form of democracy, the extent of which is clearly indicated by reactions to the employment of the burka, a reaction that is often at a very 'instinctive', emotional and visceral level (c.f. Bermea, 2013; Culcasi & Gokmen, 2011; McLarney, 2004). This is discussed directly by Ryan:

> "…there's been all this trouble with like, what Muslim girls are wearing in France and that… But it also looks like your trying to not be picked up by CCTV and that sort of thing, so it's kind of against the rules"

Placing these items at the behest of diffusion models[1], we might argue here, perhaps in an overly simplistic manner, that there is some tension between what are perceived as public and private consequences, thus denting the likelihood of innovation adoption within a particular group (Strang & Meyer, 1993). In his quote above, Jason also makes reference to the then London mayor Boris Johnson. As Goetz and Jenkins (2005) argue, the representation model of democracy insists, for legitimacy, that political leaders be accountable. Jason's comments are largely representative of Bruff's (2008) explanation that the hegemonic social organisation of common sense has waned, causing a legitimacy crisis, and thus the need for the counter-hegemony, the alternative organisation of common sense, to instil this sense of trust and accountability[2]. As a formation attempting to intercept institutions they deem as corrupt, then, these members of Occupy largely advocated the importance of transparency. Of course, it must once more be reiterated that the interviewee's accounts were not simply against the mask, but against the mask for particular reasons, while they would also justify it for others, as per the last chapter. Indeed, Ryan also discussed how getting hold of a mask, as someone with little protest experience, enabled

[1]Indeed, though there is not the space here for a full discussion, literature around diffusion and innovation diffusion provides a useful avenue for understanding the Guy Fawkes mask (c.f. Mahajan, Muller & Bass, 1990; Soule, 2004; Strang & Soule, 1997). I would argue, however, that much of this is trapped within a similar rational choice model as resource mobilization, for example with Rogers' (2003) influential model which treats culture as a resource and an 'externality' (James, 1993), creating a 'favorable or unfavorable [*sic*]' attitude at the decision-making stage.

[2]This also demonstrates the (limited) utility of the political process model.

him to feel like he was 'joining properly' at Occupy, given that he follows this up with the fact that 'everything I'd seen about the thing [Occupy] had one of those masks attached to it'.

Of course, those that amplify and distribute information about Occupy, and thus potentially construct an understanding for the likes of Ryan, are those that enable, or otherwise, a sense of accountability and trust. The media, as 'institutions of communication' (Williams, 1977a) grounded within the aforementioned economic relations of competition (Chadwick, 2013), therefore have an increasingly important role in the distribution of movement aims and efficacy. As discussed in the previous chapter, acknowledgement and concern for the role the media have in amplifying certain practices and tendencies, with privileged access to distributive space, was clear from the interviews. For example, Greg argues that:

> "…if the press pick up on negative stuff then that's what you'll be painted with and that could be the end of… so when the Daily Mail or the Express gets pictures that could incriminate you, their buyers will hate you for it. They'll still take an interest in what you're doing but only for negative reasons. Like, they'll pick up on fighting or violence or drug dealing or something like that… that's their bread and butter. I think, with Occupy […] one of them went through the pictures they'd been given and trivialised every little thing, like 'look that hippy's got a bottle of coke, they don't understand' [laughs]"

We can understand this contestation over interpretation and meaning as a form of 'semiotic guerrilla warfare' (Eco, 1989), where those within Occupy London attempt to garner positive media attention to attract and mobilise others, against a press system looking for spectacle, as well as potentially having its own agenda.

The stage for protest, the 'performative terrain' (Juris, 2008), then, is a mediated battlefield to some degree, where the fight becomes one of 'images, words, legitimation, and moral authority' (Rosset, Matinez-Torres & Hernandez-Navarro, 2005: 37). Serena, too, who had taken a role in waste management at Occupy London, describes a situation where:

> "…when you have someone who's as enthusiastic and vibrant as myself who was determined not to give our camp a bad name in the press because I had been an activist for a long time, I knew the press would jump on a dirty camp […] and so I was determined to keep it really sharp and clean and really organised in terms of you know, recycling, and waste and waste management..." (Serena)

There is thus a level of impression management where the mainstream mediators between the spectacle and its audience have strong tendencies towards certain dominant norms, and where these are often reinforced through the depiction of activists as not fitting in with

them. From Greg's example, the Coca-Cola bottle is used symbolically to represent the double standards of protesters, and thus delegitimising, making them seem less accountable and trustworthy. Serena's desire to keep the camp clean stems from the knowledge that the press would create a sense that the protesters couldn't be trusted to make governmental decisions, when they couldn't even keep their small camp clean. While both of these are framings, they rely very heavily on accepted notions, with long histories in Western societies, around cleanliness, ability to lead by example, and trustworthiness (Hardin, 2002; Thomas, 1994). There is a strong desire, then, to impress upon others an 'acceptable' understanding, through known and valued practices and forms, and thus to build a counter-hegemony compatible, at least to some extent, with the already existing ideas of others around trust and accountability.

This is not merely the case for snapshot media forms, such as photographs used by the press to make a certain point; it is also the case for mediated exposure where there is a forum for the ideas and discussion of activists when amongst other stakeholders. Here, the mainstream media appears to retain the desire for spectacle, as indicated by Kate when she discusses, with a similar level of disapproval, her experiences on a BBC Sunday morning public debate programme in a discussion about Occupy:

> '…one thing they did was they got one person who was like in an Anonymous mask […] it just wasn't good because you could only hear him and you couldn't see him, and if you got somebody on a screen and it's like zooming into people's living rooms, and they've got a mask on their face, it just doesn't communicate well, to, like, normal populations. And it wasn't that there was nobody that wanted to show their faces, like the BBC have like deliberately picked this guy because he was wearing the Anonymous mask, and like me and the other guys who had done the media training and who were experienced doing the media and who were maybe able to get things across better were kind of like pushed to back seats...

Kate goes on to claim that this would be both distracting and 'alienating' for most people and is thus problematic in attempting to expand support for the movement. While in the previous chapter Mike argued that the media create the popularity for the mask due to its potentially exaggerated use to meet the demands of spectacle, and therefore enabling a larger base of possible recruits, they also impress a certain feeling around the mask which causes the alienation of the group, their demands, and their beliefs. This notion of alienation, of presenting a view of the movement as unaccountable and untrustworthy, is something that filters into the remaining themes. We might go as far as to say that what follows are historically-placed, socio-cultural underpinning reasons for these perceptions, or

the particular ideological organisations of common sense notations into normative grammars of practice that infiltrate and enable certain judgements. One of these pertains to a distinction made in most interviews between 'fiction' and 'reality', and, with this, a general concern that the enabling factors for the mask, notably the *V for Vendetta* story, are a disruptive force as much as anything else.

7.3 Unconvincing Fiction and its Implications

In relation to what might be regarded as fiction, or as 'art', the *V for Vendetta* story was very much belittled for its perceived basis away from reality:

> "Is it useful? Erm, I suppose, it's important people don't have stupid ideas of what's going to happen though. Life isn't like it is at the cinema, don't forget that…" (Jason)
>
> "*V for Vendetta*'s a great bit of fiction. Though I do think that some people take it far too seriously, I mean I love it, but as that, a good bit of fiction. […] Well it hardly represents any actual reality does it? We don't live in a country that is that oppressive, I mean things are oppressive, but they're not that bad […] This causes problems for me personally because I think you have to have a firm grip on reality in order to change anything, so if these kids are running around in their masks shouting about a revolution where everyone's going to rise up, it's ridiculous. I mean, revolutions aren't just going to happen. Things work more slowly than they do in films, but these kids act as if all they have to do is put on a mask and bam, it's done. Nonsense" (David)
>
> "…also I think it's significant that the film is about fascism, you know, it involves like a very particular and extreme caricature of our political life, which I think is also reflected in the politics of the people who tend to wear the mask […] you know we don't live in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, but some people want you to believe that we live in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and *V for Vendetta* paints a similar world doesn't it?" (Mike)

As a result of these beliefs akin to 'political caricature', many of the activists believed those wearing the mask were less convincing and persuasive to the people they were trying to get 'on side'. For example, Jason states that:

> "…it's just a childish thing isn't it, I mean you don't want people saying 'look at these idiots who think that life is like a film', when in their everyday goings on they know it isn't like that. It lowers the tone of everything we do in a way, makes the rest of us look bad because some people aren't ready to think about things for themselves, they'd rather let a film do it for them, and miss half the shit that is actually happening"

Jason is adamant the mask discredits what protesters are trying to achieve more generally and reproduces the perceived discrepancy between the protesters and potential recruits.

This idea of being 'childish' or immature certainly resonates with many of the reports from Chapter Five (see, for example, Godwin, 2011; Jenkins, 2011a). The story is thus understood as fictional and unrealistic generally, but for those that see hints of 'reality' in places, it is specifically unconvincing and unrealistic in others. For example, Tom, when asked if he thinks use of the mask in the Million Mask March represents the final scene of *V for Vendetta*, where thousands of people with the mask descend on Parliament, claims:

> "I suppose it's a bit like it, but then not really cos it'd have to be everyone [pause] […] I suppose it's more like a whole load of comic book fans mimicking one of their favourite scenes, like at… Comic Con or something…"

John, too, in response to a similar question, argues:

> "In the erm… actual march people were so different from each other and there were different groups and that, but in the film everyone had, like, a common cause… but that's films, isn't it? It's got to sell […] …it was like loads of different types of people. And you could tell they had different views by how they were acting, especially when it started kicking off with the police"

The fictional representation of 'the people' in the film, then, belies the actual diversity involved at protest events. For those that take it seriously, to these activists, there is an important mismatch between fiction and reality that precipitates into an uninformed view of appropriate tactics. It might be said that the practice of those that wear the mask is ineffective in relation to the aims they are prescribing and following. Mike certainly takes issue also with the extent to which the fictional symbolism takes priority in the Million Mask March, and subsequently instructs to a large extent the concrete practices of protest:

> "I really like the fact that Occupy London was not going outside the Houses of Parliament, I really thought where it was both by accident and by design was really significant to what was going on, […] you know, we're not going to go and beg our masters to like fix things... and so, what I felt like […] was that in some ways we've got this mask as an artefact of social movements right now, cool, and I get it, I really like *V for Vendetta* […] but if the mask is determining what we actually do in the streets, i.e. on November the 5th […] it's just a day, if anything that's even more like we're just practising our own little minority rituals... 'oh this day's significant for our new subculture we've decided we are a part of' […] I thought some kind of Occupy mounted march on Parliament could have been designed well but that wasn't it, but it was almost like it was happening because the artefact was determining the action, do you know what I mean?"

Another example of this mismatch and its implications is given by Jason, who talks heatedly about the importance of giving people facts to work with, and thus enabling a critical reasoning with credible evidence, something that works upon discursive material of

rationality complexly bound up with Enlightenment thought and liberalism and other powerful traces (c.f. Foucault, 1984; Soper, 2001). He argues that…

> "…things like… *V for Vendetta*, whatever, are all about revolution aren't they, when of course we realise that's not really likely is it, things don't just change… so all this stuff just carries on while we're watching films… you know, we need to be finding out the facts about Iraq, instead of working on the basis of some film. It might make us think a bit more, yea, but doesn't it make us more used to like big epic adventures and heroes and like hero stories? Like, people are overjoyed in America when Bush comes out and says 'we won'. I mean, you go in all guns blazing and it all builds up and you're waiting for some Texan in a suit to say 'we did it, we won', but no it obviously doesn't work like that… the whole 'we went in, we made it better, it's done, we can go home' routine is a pile of shite, and you can see that in the vacuum left over" (Jason)

The hero narrative that Jason refers to here, we can argue, is a dominant cultural trope that reproduces certain norms, such as that of the entrepreneurial individual (Anderson & Warren, 2011). Such a trope is considerable in its impact, for example Munslow (2013: 26) discusses important American figures in history, such as industrialist Andrew Carnegie who 'fashioned' the 'entrepreneur-hero' narrative that, through wise administration, would promote the 'reconciliation of social classes through the gospels of wealth and success'[3]. The, at least partial, impact of this can be seen in its development into an apparent hegemony within the industrial era and beyond. This individualistic and aspirational narrative is commonplace within fictional stories and comics that re-inflect the tradition, and they can therefore be considered a site of cultural production and reproduction (Hassler-Forest, 2012). This particular reinforcement of an ideological organisation of common sense is most explicitly evident in what might be considered propaganda, during the Cold War for example (York & York, 2012).

While this may resonate with some, as it fits with the ideologically dominant set of norms, it becomes apparent that it is at odds with the norms of others. This is most clear with Mike, who finds problematic the notion discussed in the last chapter that *everyone* – or perhaps more accurately, *anyone* – can be regarded as the hero, what was described as the 'politics of no-one':

> "…the mask, on the one hand, so you've got two things in *V for Vendetta*, you've got the final moment of the democratic mass emerging, just 'the people', literally is performed on the streets of London, and it's everyone and

[3]This can of course be seen as tied up with other traces, such as those pertaining to religion (c.f. Weber, 1958), which are/were actively articulated at some point in history when conditions allowed.

> they all look the same, and they're all V, and then there's V whose the kind of heroic saviour […] It's significant like how the story of social change happens is significant and I think that the story of a saviour coming along and fixing everything for everyone else is like a deeply problematic idea" (Mike)

The fictional surfacing of a hero at a time of need is problematic for Mike as it emphasises the reliance and dependence on some superior other. There is concern, then, that those mobilized by such things as the *V for Vendetta* film have inaccurate or ineffective expectations, or perhaps a different mode within which they rationalise and calculate, and aren't therefore prepared for, or fully aware of, the nature of the task:

> "It's important to get people active, but it's a problem if they come to it with expectations that can't be managed. If you come to an event thinking it's all champagne and caviar, what happens when that runs out and you're left with a leaking tent and, like, eating mouldy bread. People who come to events because they are stakeholders or you make them feel like that anyway, then they will more likely stick around, and then you just have to draw people in with other things that interest them…" (Jason)

Jason also points to the implications of this, regarding the willingness to carry through what some of the activists deem as necessary:

> "…how do you get people aware of something, but not only aware but involved… so if I was saying in order to make things more equal, more egalitarian, we need to remove some of the things that you depend on… or you think you depend on anyway, how do you get people to agree with that? […] basically the changes that a lot of us want aren't what others want, which I guess is a much older problem, isn't it? Who with money is going to want to give it away to actually achieve equal distribution of wealth?"

John implies the same sentiment when he exclaims:

> "…well that's the big question [whether people could be galvanised as per the end of the film], but probably not. I mean, maybe it is possible in the future, but it's never going to happen now, when people can, like, go on holiday whenever they like and, like, go clubbing at the weekend [laughs]"

Relatedly, Serena states how those at Occupy weren't pulling their weight:

> "…people weren't really prepared to do those kind of things that their mothers did […] and we were producing a lot of waste, erm, and it wasn't matching the amount of energy that people were putting in in terms of waste management, and when people were there everyday I was saying 'please' you know, 'I need help' but I wasn't really getting very much […] but in terms of the revolution, you would still have to fetch wood and carry water and clean up and you know the revolution still needs the basics doing, you know, it does need that and that was kind of missing a little bit. Erm, I got frustrated, and people were running

> off to meetings, and there's actually things to be done... and you know, I'm not your mother... and I have so much experience as an activist, and I felt a little bit like the cleaning lady, in the end..."

It is clear from these expositions that the disruption of others' norms is only one part of the task. Getting other people involved doesn't necessarily mean complete unity of beliefs, aims and means by which these aims can be achieved. *The relative distance between the practical consciousness of the incoming supporters and that of the activists already involved also has potential to cause difficulties*. This is contestation over the specific ideological organisation of common sense, where there appear to be fears that the norms of the dominant culture may in some sense frame or instruct the practical engagement with what is understood as the alternative, thus potentially leading to ineffective action, and the reproduction of the dominant.

This conflict within a social movement can be considered an area of neglect within social movement studies. This is the *Meluccian challenge*: to better understand the difference that makes up any potential unity (Gillan, 2008: 248). While some have looked to these internal dynamics (c.f. Taylor, 1989; Whittier, 2001; Zirakzadeh, 1997) this can be considered somewhat rare in social movement scholarship. One might consider, in a similar manner to ideas around the contestation over epistemological closure, these different groups and their collision through the lens of Gramsci's *forms of grammar*, which he extrapolates from language to practice more generally (c.f. Boothman, 2012). The activists and the newer recruits can be understood as having different, practical, 'normative grammars'. That is, they have different rules around practice that are encouraged and sanctioned through 'reciprocal monitoring, reciprocal teaching, reciprocal 'censorship'' (Gramsci, 1995). Associated heavily with common sense, it can be argued though that, over time, these become 'spontaneous', in that they are 'unconscious' and 'seem natural' (Ives, 2004a: 90-91). The 'spontaneous' grammars of the two groups then come into conflict until, if at all, a new compromised form of normative grammar is established. This, of course, is a process that may take a long time, with the implicit settlement likely to be the result of 'a whole complex of molecular processes' (Gramsci, 1995). Most social movements will not have this time, meaning that those reasons for wearing the mask that are a part of the new recruits' 'spontaneous' grammar, may be a bigger obstacle than other social movement theorists might foresee. The horizontalism of Occupy, we might argue, brings these spontaneous grammars into close proximity, and it seems here that, while some are open to the styles and grammatical differences of others, the majority of the activists interviewed seem to want to impose a normative conditioning upon the grammar of others. Again this is by no means total, as most

activists realised the need to take others' accounts and understandings into consideration. William, for example, though speaking about and extrapolating his time as a student union leader, claimed that he wanted

> "…to carry everyone along together, or at least 99% of us along together, as far as we can… and you've got to speak to people's general understanding…"

This could very well account for both those that Occupy were looking to recruit and those already recruited but with a largely different idea of normative behaviour. Still, while such contestation certainly existed – *between* interviews and *within* single interviews – there remained a strong view of what tactics would be appropriate and, by implication, what were generally deemed as inappropriate. Another set of practices that seem far removed from the spontaneous grammar of the activists concern the unapproachability of anonymity and the looming threat of violence it potentially effectuates, a factor that emerges also within the results of the protest event analysis of Chapter Five (cf. Pelley et al., 2011; Waites, 2011).

7.4 Concerning Violence… and Anonymity

Similar to psycho-social theories of 'deindividuation' (Diener, 1977; Zimbardo, 1969), the feeling of becoming *one of the many* as well as being hidden from surveillance it was argued had the potential to cause disinhibited behaviour. As Greg describes:

> "…people behave differently with the mask on, they definitely do. Like, if everyone is wearing the same thing they don't need to worry about being singled out afterwards or by the police. You get the idea at protests that if someone is going to kick off, or if someone wants to kick off it's the ones wearing masks… I mean that's got to be partly what it's for"

The resulting violence that Greg begins to describe here is common with the mask it seems, particularly at such events as the Million Mask March, of which the majority of the participants had experience, knowledge and strong opinions. John describes the legally sanctioned part of this march:

> "I saw a massive group of masked protesters attacking the barriers in front of the police, at one point […] at one point they picked up a barricade thing and threw it at the police. So yea, it's quite rare you get to see that […] the police were getting pretty scrappy too […] I saw a few people arrested and that, so they were getting people but generally it was a bit crazy. I mean I left after about two hours when they went wandering around London […] it was intimidating, definitely quite scary. People looked scared"

John's shocked reaction to the brutality, between mask-wearers and the police, at the Million Mask March expresses something important about the way violence is understood within our current conjuncture. Various theorists have endeavoured to understand changes in attitudes towards violence over time. Elias (1996: 31) suggests that a moral repugnance to brutal and violent acts has gradually spread with the expanding of civil society, and that, in the modern era, human beings are better equipped to fulfil their basic needs without 'destroying' or 'in other ways harming each other'. Foucault (1995: 49) also discusses the use of violence in pre-modern societies as a system of spectacular discipline carried out on behalf of injured sovereignty, 'to make everyone aware, through the body of the criminal, of the unrestrained presence of the sovereign'. To both of these theorists, more modern techniques of discipline displaced violence, though we might argue, particularly given the discussion of police violence in the preceding chapter, and as Elias does, with Weber (1965), that the state, through law enforcement and military force, retains and develops a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence. However seriously we take these commentators, we can effectively build on the notion that the norms around violence have changed, as with John's reaction, to a point where violent practice, away from legitimate and legally organised violence, is rare and condemned on occurrence. In line with this, when violence does occur, such as at protests, it may be helpful to understand it, as with Foucault's pre-modern form, as 'performative violence' in an attempt to catch the attention of others (Juris, 2005: 414)[4]. Indeed, some seek to 'affect the public by launching assaults on constituted power in order to intervene in political processes' of which they have 'no direct access' (Thompson, 2010: 159), perhaps as a process of making power visible and therefore movable (Ruiz, 2013). The weight, however, is firmly on the side of those with the power. For example, Zane discusses the implications of recent legislation on violence:

> "I'm a non-violent direct action protester, you know, from Twyford Down and stuff; if you want to build a mass movement you're generally more successful being peaceful and non-violent because the state has a monopoly on violence, they've got all the guns, weapons, truncheons, CS gas, everything. Soon as you start getting violent, you know, they've got all the tools. Erm, there's that ongoing debate about violence-non-violence, and what is property damage and what is violence... and, you know, they redefined terrorism as damage to property in 2001 with the new terrorism bill, so technically if you go and

[4]The conditions of violence, the utilisation of notions of violence and the strategic use of violence as an 'index' and referential device for other societal factors is very well documented in Hall et al's (1978) *Policing the Crisis.*

> damage a bulldozer, put sugar in the tank, or you undo something so that it won't chop the trees down the next day, you're a terrorist now or whatever…"

The norms that underpin these views and their extreme prescription in institutionalised legislature can be seen very clearly in the media coverage of violent protest in recent times. The Million Mask March is a prime example of this.

According to Harbisher (2016: 297), coverage of the 2014 Million Mask March began the day before the event, with the Guardian 'warning that London's Metropolitan Police force was preparing for the worst'. The coverage immediately before, during and after by the other mainstream British newspapers all created the image of 'civil unrest' rather than 'public protest', using the buzzwords of 'violence' and 'injury' to create a sense of riot and unruliness. In doing so, the 'tabloid right defames campaigners in an attempt to ostracise them both from middle- and working-class empathy' (Harbisher, 2016: 300). This, however, is only possible due to the strength of the dominant norms around violence in society. These norms are undoubtedly strengthened through such media practice, but they are also produced and reproduced on the basis of a complex interplay between many ever-changing factors, factors changing through human practice. Examples of this include the concurrent media emphasis on terrorism – Robert, for example, talks of a friend that suspects all refugees of being 'terrorists in disguise' – and the impact of an entertainment industry and culture that glorifies the sensational, the dramatic, and very often the violent (Lichtenfeld, 2007; Nacos, 2016; Weimann & Winn, 1994). These are two – of *many*[5] – factors that serve to shape common sense, from which people can shape ideological perspectives around violence, and it is clearly the case, to the activists interviewed, that they must adhere to a certain perspective to avoid being too far from the dominant organisation, which prescribes that violence is abhorrent and uncivilised. For example, Kate claims that:

> "…if you're covering your face at a protest I think it's probably because you're either wanting to do something but it's gonna get you arrested... or because you're previously have done something that may have got you arrested, or you're worried that you're on some sort of list perhaps […] I don't feel like those sort of things are gonna be that useful, I think that once you've been violent then you get disregarded"

To Michelle, when asked if she had seen much violence at protests, it is the amplification by the media that leads to this instant disregarding:

> 'Yea you get certain factions at most protests, and the media single them out which makes everyone else look bad… take the student protests, the vast

[5]There is unfortunately not the scope to delve into such a wide variety of factors here.

> majority of that was peaceful, but then you get a bunch of violent kids and that's what everyone remembers of the protest, that's what the media want and that's what they almost always get, you know, you can't control everyone at a protest'

As Gamson and Meyer (1996: 288) exclaim, to the spectacle-orientated media reinforcing a particular ideologically-inflected perspective, 'fire in the belly is fine, but fire on the ground photographs better', but often this is articulated as 'random acts of senseless violence' and undermines the efforts of campaigners (Juris 2005: 414), as they become 'symbolically delegitimized' (Hall, 1993: 66).

The 2010 protests over university tuition fees in London appear to be an indicative example of this, as David also states:

> 'The student protests were the same… a small group with no idea of the bigger picture decides to get a bit feisty with the police and all of a sudden you're all over the news, pictures, videos, the lot, and people are angry at you… that's despite being on your side only the day before'

Coming back to the Million Mask March, Robert gives a fiery account of his own experience, and how he saw it as damaging to the prospects of 'serious' activists:

> 'Yea I was there a few years back, fucking hated it. Like the majority was just there to misbehave, and not anything clever either […] it was just utter carnage, you've got people throwing bottles before anything has even started, I remember overhearing one group of kids, I mean they must have been like 15, claiming they'd been drinking for hours and laughing about it. I get that some people take it seriously and that's great, you know, it's their way of releasing some aggression, most of the others don't take it seriously it's just a bit of fun doing things you wouldn't normally be allowed to do, it's not serious enough but… but then it makes protesters look so bad… so like the consequences are shit for our reputation […] if you had a neutral reputation going into a protest then, forget the media for a minute, people are more likely to wanna see what's going on, never gonna happen if they already have this shitty image of protesters or activists or whatever… those kids getting pissed and throwing bottles at the police can only make that a whole lot fucking worse… and the media make that worse obviously, cos actually no you can't forget the cameras'

There is a sense then, once again, of mobilization but with an instructive organisation of common sense that conflicts with that of the activists interviewed. Furthermore, it is, as Mike explains, an organisation that is decidedly 'subcultural' and thus divisive, when the interviewees largely sought to formulate an organisation that is inclusive, in attempt to mobilise more widely and tap into those still practicing via the dominant set of norms in the conjuncture. Such a war of position, bringing other subaltern groups into a more powerful

and influential historic bloc, in order to instigate what Pellicani (1981: 4) describes as a 'cultural occupation of society', can be understood as essential for gaining power and initiating change[6]. For activists, this involves finding an appropriate relative distance between the alternative and the dominant norms, understanding and working with the concoction of residual, dominant and emergent factors, where 'those kids getting pissed', as Robert refers to them, demonstrate a distance that is too great for any form of resonance. The mask, here, is instrumental in achieving this obstructive proximity, in that its anonymity largely provides the means by which these practices can be undertaken.

The distance evident here, along with the objective of raising awareness and formulating such an historic bloc through inclusive activity, is well summed up by Mike:

> "…I was seeing people on the sides of the street that... you know, I really believed at the time in a mad utopian of like this being a general movement of the 99% as I would have said it then. I had a real faith at the time, in our ability to kind of mobilise a significant proportion of people by creating this open an accessible place, and again I don't necessarily believe these things now, this really open and accessible place for radical, mutual and self-education, mutual and self-empowerment as an active citizenry and who knows what that could lead to, but I want to give my energies to this process , and so when it felt like a minority, what felt like such a minority of people walking down the streets with their masks on doing their ritual enclosing practices by looking weird and saying weird shit, and I was looking at these people on the street as I was walking past thinking you're the people that really matter. It doesn't really matter about this tiny number of people who are in the road, like if we really want to be an optimistic forward looking movement of the 99%, this really isn't the sort of shit we should be doing"

Mike's concern is that this becomes merely *sub*cultural and thus not a conducive position from which to universalise. It seems there is a tension here between subcultural and cultural norms, as, according to Piotrowski (2013: 409), 'one of the key issues for subcultures is the preservation of the purity of subcultural groups and their members'. Indeed, whereas, Martin (2002) argues, social movement emphasis is largely on action for external-orientated purpose, subcultural dynamics are often understood as focused on internal interplay (Clark, 2003; Hodkinson, 2003; Martin, 2002). Of course, as per new social movements, we could argue that there is clear interplay between the two, involving 'the mode by which individuals act together in order to constitute a collectivity… and the methods by which they confront the external world' (Offe, 1985: 829), often to gain legitimation and legitimacy of this

[6]As stated in Chapter Three, this argument has its critiques (Day, 2004, 2005), but the data here appears to firmly back it up.

collectivity. We can comprehend this same process through the language of Gramsci, as the forging of an expansive and united bloc is seen as a precondition for social change. A bloc that is only a possibility due to the organisation of common sense in such a way that resonates with the internal group, or continually changes to do so, thus retaining unity, whilst also resonating to others, incorporating their demands at least to some extent. The concern here over those wearing the mask demonstrates the inherent difficulty of such a task, particularly as others come to protest with their own normalised practices. There thus appears, explicit in Mike's argument and implicit in the claims of others, to be a tension between the values and practical consciousness of what the interviewees understand as the social movement, certainly of Occupy, and those of this subculture associated with the social movement, most obviously manifest in the Million Mask March. The task these interviewees appear to foreground is a building of unity, in contrast to the fragmentary approach taken by these activists, something that would appear to present difficulties with the horizontalist approach claimed by Occupy and its contemporary movements.

7.5 Summary

This chapter has demonstrated another side to the interview data. Where the previous chapter looked to the constraints upon the mask's use and how it comes to be favoured within the case of Occupy London, this chapter has worked with the strategic articulatory processes by which the mask is judged in relation to specific beliefs, processes that impact upon the mask's perceived legitimacy, a specific 'court of appeal'. While the previous chapter worked more in conjunction with the already-existing elements of common sense, this chapter has demonstrated how such traces are contested, laboured upon and presented. The need of subsuming others into a larger counter-hegemony becomes clear here, as most of the interviewees described the importance of challenging accepted views of societal organisation. The Guy Fawkes mask, due to its relative distance from the norms of potential recruits, largely came to be seen as an obstacle to this counter-hegemonic project. While these processes were described too in the previous chapter, this chapter has elucidated a deeper level of complexity. The mask cannot be seen simply as being adopted on the basis of the new context, where reproduction is production anew with fresh re-articulation and meaning aligned with the different lineage. Instead, this chapter has demonstrated the contested dimension of these processes by different groups. In doing so it has provided an example of how human activity, invested with power, attempts to mobilise and hypostatise certain meanings over others.

This has been demonstrated throughout, implicitly: through the attempts of the media reports to stake their claim on the mask and the culture jamming artists to upset already sturdy meanings in Chapter Five, and through the use of the mask to challenge already existing narratives and tropes in Chapter Six. This cultural contestation over meaning has been most evident here, however, in the close and internal dynamics of the movement itself. One can see the intricacies of not only how certain meanings are pushed, but also how that meaning then impacts and influences other sets of meanings, namely the perceptions of Occupy to the outside world. This is perhaps the reason for the vague feeling of dislike amongst the interviewees more generally: the perception that the meaning ascribed to the mask will be too far removed from what they want to represent themselves as, particularly given the culturally scorned violence involved in the Million Mask March, which almost all participants condemned. Such impression management is at once strategic and rooted in the wider social and cultural notations. For example, the residual norms surrounding accountability, democratic legitimacy and notions of reality, or *living in the real world*, that stem to some degree from the Enlightenment, can be seen as cultural residue that manifests in events, objects and meanings, and that is reinforced in particular institutions and institutional practices. These can then become used once again in alternative ways in different ideological directions, though the ideological orientation of the Enlightenment and liberal thought can be understood as hegemonic, or dominant within a hegemonic system, in its capacity to frame other manifestations.

The media, a sphere of those aforementioned institutional practices, particularly in its more commercial and mainstream form, have the power to distribute a representation seen as unfavourable by the interviewees, and thus activists were even more troubled by the potential relative distance between those using the masks, and the public they hope to persuade. This concern of becoming a 'political caricature' was most evident in the testimony regarding the Guy Fawkes mask wearing protester on the BBC Sunday morning programme. Numerous interviews were indeed worried, drawing on convincing cultural tropes of 'being grown-up', that protesters and their movement more widely would be regarded as 'childish' – a view vindicated in the results of the protest event analysis, that found this specifically in the coverage of Occupy London. This is particularly pertinent, some of them felt, in an age of a waning hegemonic system, when the unaccountability of politicians and the political system required a perceptibly-accountable alternative. Those traces drawn upon to make sense of the world, around legitimacy and democratic accountability, thus frame the way decisions are made, and practices are selected and

worked. It is, then, in attempting to better understand these traces and their ideological reworking, what we might describe as the totality or the *whole*, that one can further comprehend the individual decisions and meaning-making around a cultural artefact – best understood, therefore, as the *part*. The mask becomes wrapped up in a battle over ideological direction, as participants worry about the expectations of newly persuaded recruits, who come with a different inflection of these traces. This signifies, potentially, one of the biggest obstacles for social movements: how, with the resources, time and opportunities available in an epoch marked by the individualism of near-hegemonic neoliberalism, to build an alignment between new and old to effectively form a collective identity, or what we might describe as a counter-hegemonic historic bloc.

Chapter Eight. Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to better understand the role of culture within social movements. It has done so with a sustained discussion of one particular cultural artefact, the Guy Fawkes mask, within a specific protest setting, Occupy London, and therefore provides both a theoretical and an empirical contribution to social movement scholarship. Aligned with the methodological approach taken here, the theoretical and empirical contribution are necessarily in dialogue and provide a platform for future work testing the appropriateness of a historical materialist approach to culture for understanding social movements.

On the basis of its apparent popularity briefly described in other social movement scholarship (Call, 2008; Fuchs, 2013; Gledhill, 2012; Harbisher 2016; Juris, 2012; Kohns, 2013; Ruiz, 2013), the thesis employed a protest event analysis to ascertain to what extent the practice of adopting the Guy Fawkes mask has become part of the social movement and protest 'repertoire'. Finding that its popularity and diffusion was very much widespread and diverse, it selected Occupy London as a case example from which interviews helped to better understand the conditions for such a practice (the basis of my second research question). This was analysed in accordance with the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Three (my third research question).

This chapter identifies the central findings of the project, in relation to the theoretical discussions already covered, as well as the implications for the field and for future work. The major contribution offered is a theoretical approach to culture that moves beyond the static, instrumentally voluntarist and often power-ignorant discussions of frame analysis, the often overly-ideational and abstract claims of new social movement theories, and, as confronted over the course of this research, certain postmodern claims of unlimited semiosis and ever-slipping signifiers. My main contribution has been to introduce a theory that is at once historical, reliant upon human agency (though agency that is conditioned by experience), and imbued – often unknowingly – with power. Another important part of this contribution involved an understanding of meaning-making – around the Guy Fawkes mask, for example – that is contested based upon experience, and the social location in which it occurs. As is clear in this exposition, the empirical and substantive analysis of the Guy Fawkes mask marked a further contribution of this project. These contributions are unpacked in more detail below.

8.1 Overall Theoretical Contribution

The primary contribution of this research is a theory of culture with a greater reach than those previously used within social movement theory. That is, a theory that treats culture not simply as an instrumental and strategic resource to be used for mobilising recruits, but one that can account also for the construction of a rationality as to why certain schemas, ideas or practices might be perceptibly available in the first place, while also retaining an explanation based on material distribution and interest more generally. In a similar fashion to Melucci's discussion of a necessary identity prior to choreographed collective action, I argue that it is only after this *enabling* that instrumental reasoning and calculation can occur. The theory here, as above, provided a set of questions far more conducive to understanding a popular cultural artefact, such as the Guy Fawkes mask, by shifting emphasis to the historical dimension of human activity that enabled it to become an option in protest. To avoid what, in frame analysis, has been described as a question of 'what is going on here?' the focus has shifted toward questions with greater relevance, such as 'under what circumstances do we think things are real?' and 'under what conditions do people believe in a particular version of reality?' (Benford, 1997: 412). Indeed, frames, which are strategically packaged and communicated by movement entrepreneurs, give little sense of the power invested within them – in the language and notations used to augment a particular version of reality, and therefore in what counts as a legitimate frame in the first place.

In its affiliation with resource mobilization, framing relies too heavily on the importance of resources, and, in doing so, misses the broader, everyday basis of culture. It can be argued that some new social movement theorists, such as Melucci (1985, 1996), are more adequate with this side of culture, but less at the former. As discussed in Chapter Two, new social movement theory relies too heavily, at times, on a post-material, symbolically structured world of cultural codes, with too little grounding in the conditioning effects of social positioning and class interest. The cultural theory discussed here uses the wider, everyday understanding of culture but also draws upon a practical, creative conception – akin to that of framing and to Swidler's practical notion of the cultural toolbox – and places them in dialectical relation to one another. In this way, and as part of a longer trajectory of a productivist epistemology, we are born into a certain culture, through our experience are reproduced by it, and utilise it in creative ways to reproduce our situation anew. This theoretical conceptualisation of culture – and the questions that one is able to pose as a result of it – is aligned with Marx's early accounts of historical materialism and his

pragmatological dialectic, as productive activity is undertaken by individuals that are born into certain conditions before then reacting to and working upon them once again. It is also aligned with Williams' translation of this into cultural terms, where humans are regarded as inherently creative – 'culture is ordinary' – and culture is seen in its full and historicised mode, where ideational material emerges out of a material setting and set of relations, and is thus restricted by material distribution, and the historical, cultural inheritance[1]. Processes of meaning-making, around the mask, then, are determined, but subject to articulation and human action that then determines once more.

8.2 The Cultural Availability of Practice

The initial protest event analysis effectively demonstrated the sheer scale of the numbers adopting the mask, in a huge diversity of locations around the world. Indeed, the career of the mask plotted out in Chapter Five implied the constant notational leaning of the mask upon other factors for its own availability. Its history hinted at the gradual development of meaning over time, after further use from different stakeholders. This was evident as the year following the film adaptation of *V for Vendetta*, the mask began to be seen in protest. It wasn't until Anonymous' *Project Chanology* against the Church of Scientology, however, that the mask came to be a regular sight in protest. Indeed, even after this it took until the Occupy Movement to reach what I describe as critical mass, with adoption growing seemingly from its observation in protest. Besides providing a useful sample for interviews, this also played its role in the first London-based Million Mask March, where the mask was almost an essential item. From the interviews, numerous traces emerged *entangled* within a rationality that is a precondition for employing the mask. The immediate conditions that protesters find themselves in certainly formed part of this precondition, but even these were culturally mediated. I am referring here to notions of surveillance, which are directly linked to the power invested in the police by the state and thus, technically, the consent of wider society. The mask was perceived as a logical choice given the material and social relations invoked by current social policy, and its manifestation in police behaviours. But this was deeply combined with the perceptions of surveillance diffused via particular fictional forms, such as Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *V for Vendetta*. From these, certain cultural tropes such as *Big Brother* and ideas of a *surveillance state* and *censorship* were adopted to explain the use of the mask and its practical and symbolic utility within the

[1] In a manner far more complex than is permitted in the reflection paradigm of base-superstructure thought.

protest setting. It is not, it seems, that these were merely used as a resource to complement explanations of the protest setting. Rather, ideas of surveillance were *made up of* these notations in a certain ideological or intentional direction. The practice is thus constituted of the socially and materially derived experience of the protesters and the cultural notations *tied into*, and central to the process of making sense of, this experience.

There is a confluence of traces observable within the *V for Vendetta* story, including dystopian and Orwellian elements and aspects of the Gunpowder Plot, which are organised with a particular and intentional direction, a manipulation of the cultural inheritance or common sense that is adopted and worked with by those that wear the mask in protest. This is evident within both the protest event analysis and the accounts provided by the interviewees. With Williams, such forms can be understood to resonate because of the ability of the artist, writer or, we might add, *activist* to organise experience in such a way as to resonate with the experiences of others, after they themselves have been through a similar conditioning process[2]. In the protest event analysis, for example, the use of *Captain America* and the *Hope* posters represent the bricolage-type re-appropriation of certain understandings, as the imagery of the mask, and thus of *V for Vendetta*, is superimposed onto already meaningful works. These represent processes of cultural creativity in action, where common sense is guided in certain directions, for certain audiences, in articulatory attempts to effect closure over meaning, or at least open up seemingly closed meanings. The story, in both the graphic novel and film adaptation, therefore attempts some level of *closure* over meaning or an equivalence between *its* meaning and reality, a process Volosinov (1986) describes as making the sign *appear* 'uni-accentual'. The attempt made, clearly successfully, by *V for Vendetta*, and those that implicitly adopt this narrative as a precondition of the mask, depends on its ability to 'ring true' with its audience, to resonate with their social and material experience. One might consider this the task of intellectual persuasion necessary as part of a 'war of position' (Gramsci, 1971). The resonation certainly seems to occur for some, in its fit with the *expected* rights and freedoms, culturally accumulated over time and invested within practices, traditions, and institutions, of a liberal system, as well as the heavily discussed relations of what respondents described as 'advanced capitalism' or 'neoliberalism'. These discussions, however, provide further complexity in understanding meaning-making processes.

[2]We might simply refer to this as 'socialisation', but such a term is not to be taken too simply.

Culture, then, spreads further than framing gives it credit, and is limited by material factors far more than afforded it by new social movement theorising. With this framework, one can demonstrate that the availability of certain underpinning cultural traces is essential for such cultural opportunities as the Guy Fawkes mask. I have outlined numerous of these above, drawing from the analysis of Chapters Five and Six. These demonstrate a greater complexity in understanding the role of culture within social movements. However, in Chapter Seven, following on from a brief discussion of capitalism in Chapter Six, my emphasis shifted away from the organisations of common sense at play, and toward how these are received and laboured upon. In doing so, an even greater level of complexity is clear and where some, such as Call (2008) and Ruiz (2013), imply or claim that the mask – given its widespread diffusion – has 'infinite flexibility', I have argued that not only is it *finite* due to the availability of certain traces, *even these* are contested, and the likelihood of their appropriation is thus even *narrower*. Resting implicitly on Volosinov's (1986) argument – that certain parties or classes might attempt to equate their meaning with reality – signs in this view remain *historically* multi-accentual, allowing room for resistance and contestation. This contestation relies upon a different reworking of the cultural inheritance, remembering of course that this is materially and socially grounded or anchored, and thus impacting upon the likelihood of cultural resonation, or 'narrative fidelity', as it might be called by frame analysts.

8.3 The Cultural Contestation of Practice

The claims around Occupy London and its use of the mask within the protest event analysis demonstrated evidence of attempts at an equation of meaning with reality by certain reporters, and those interviewed within reports. Many within the reports selected certain traditions within which to place the mask over others, some looking simply to Anonymous, others to the longer history from Guy Fawkes and thus painting a more radical and ambitious story, and still others relating it solely to the *V for Vendetta* franchise. It was considered a fashion, a fad, and a money-maker for capitalist corporations by those who contested its relevance to protest. As stated above, arguments around the negative impact of capitalism's contemporary form arose in the interviews. Such abstract categories or labels for entire social systems are made concrete with certain empirical examples, such as the level of narcissism and narcissistic tendencies that the Occupy London interviewees argued were becoming more apparent in society over time, which a number of them linked to the individualisation of society under neoliberalism. Links were forged between individualistic behaviours and the desire to wear the mask, particularly with regard to fragmenting systems

of communication such as social media, which some argue serve to feed the increased desire for impression management and the conscious construction, in a very entrepreneurial manner, of a desirable identity or persona. The interviewees argued that the desire for a picture in the mask increased in order for its use in building an impression to present to others, as part of what was expressed as 'selfie culture'. This demonstrates, as in Chapter Six, an organisation of common sense that makes the mask available. However, the mask was largely derided for its role in perpetuating this way of behaving, indicative of a particular social system against which most interviewees claimed they were protesting. These internal dynamics demonstrate that there is therefore contestation *within* and *over* the range of what is available for articulation, a *further* 'setting of limits' and 'exertion of pressures', based upon the interests, the value judgements, or the particular intentional use of the cultural inheritance of the different parties.

The individualist and narcissistic tendencies, as well as many other aspects of the mask, were seen by many of the interviewees as deeply unhelpful and the language adopted across the chapters here enables a more in-depth understanding of this. For example, the concepts and language from Gramsci and those following him to some degree – of a war of position within the private realms of civil society, the construction of a historic bloc comprising of disparate groups, and the general development of counter-hegemony – seems to adequately describe the endeavours of the activists interviewed[3]. The emphasis here, as with E. P. Thompson in Chapter Three, is *class struggle,* or the development of a class consciousness, not class as a reified, hypostatised *thing in place*, but the process of developing an emergent movement that can contend with the dominant without being incorporated into the hegemonic system. Despite the mask's apparent proximity to the dominant system – in its sensational, spectacular and individualist employment – the reasons given for this suspicion appear to stem from the importance of resonating with others, and *building* a collective movement through education and sharing experience. The majority of the interviewees focused on a variety of ways in which the mask was a hindrance to this cause.

The counter-hegemony that the majority of the interviewees argued they were trying to form was one that could connect with others, with a more communitarian, horizontalist approach. This was in opposition to politicians that they argued had proven themselves as untrustworthy, unaccountable and corrupt. To attract, recruit or mobilise others, then, an

[3]This is despite Day's (2004) critique of the *hegemony of hegemony*, discussed in Chapter Three.

accountable and trustworthy reputation was necessary, something with which the mask, in its very functionality, was in perceptible conflict. In Chapter Seven I discussed the concept of physiognomy and the importance of the face in the history of Western culture. Aside from the fact that the mask is well-documented to represent the face of a man looking to assassinate a king, merely covering the face is therefore seen as synonymous with corruption and a lack of transparency. As another form of accountability, the Occupy respondents also spoke of wanting to be taken seriously, where the mask makes protesters look 'childish'. There was anger demonstrated at the ease with which it allows outsiders to shrug off protesters as having underdeveloped ideas of how the world works, or ideas taken from fictional accounts – something that came to the fore in the protest event analysis reports. It was seen as inevitable that such a thing would likely discourage different groups from joining the movement.

Another likely form of dissuasion, perhaps the biggest to the protesters interviewed, was the increased likelihood of disinhibited behaviour. All respondents asked about the behaviour of those wearing the mask felt that it would cause behaviour to change, as protesters were potentially freed from apparent behavioural obligations. The intimidation as a result of this, perceptions of which were seen in both the protest event analysis and the interviews, was likely to create an image of the protest as violent, irresponsible and inappropriate. Such was the case with the related Million Mask March which most of the interviewees felt was out of control and in no way helpful. Numerous protesters made the point that this is against what they stand for, as non-violent direct action activists, and directly against the ethos of Occupy London, which was envisaged as being open and approachable. As building counter-hegemony via a war of position entails a 'cultural occupation of civil society' (Pellicani, 1981: 4), the action of the protesters is extremely important in conveying their norms and values and thus resonating with others they hope to recruit. As demonstrated in Chapter Seven, the changes in how violence is perceived over time demonstrate that this is a tactic unlikely to resonate with the majority of groups in society. This situation, as well as all of these contested factors, is made all the more difficult by the constant presence of the mainstream media, who, in their role as an institution of communication have a clear role in amplifying certain, usually hegemonic (dominant and residual), organisations of common sense.

The mainstream media were acknowledged for their role in producing accounts that belittled the efforts of protesters – as childish, as hypocritical, as violent – and the interviewees in their attempt to educate others were therefore very careful with how they behaved and looked at protests. The mask, however, not only goes against this, but also

provides a sense of spectacle highly sought after by the media – to the extent that certain interviews commented on the exaggerated number of masks that one would expect at the Occupy camp. Indeed, respondents described the presence of an 'attention economy', where competition – as part of the highly competitive, consumerist form of capitalism – between news outlets requires that coverage satisfy requirements more closely linked to the entertainment industry. The 'sensational' impact of the mask, then, creates a spectacle that is more likely to be reported. While activists felt they had to play this game to obtain media coverage and 'airplay time', thus rendering the mask available and a logical inclusion into the protest repertoire, they argued that it misrepresents their values and goals, subverting the message of Occupy London. There seemed also to be some concern that those recruited into the movement, on the basis of this coverage and on the basis of the mask and what it represents, would have expectations of the movement far removed from those already there. Pertaining to what can be called the 'Meluccian challenge', where analysis must attempt to understand the inevitable difference within what is all-too-often perceived as a unity within movements, this research demonstrates the extent of this potential disunity. A number of interviewees certainly appeared disconcerted with the subcultural tendencies of inward-looking impression management, as opposed to the outward-looking inclusive, yet differently principled, attempts at resonation that Occupy was stated as working toward.

The Guy Fawkes mask, then, with its clear popularity and wide diffusion, is available for use in protest, and as part of the protest repertoire, due to a complicated contextual set of materially-grounded articulations, made up of all of these traces over time. It is also unavailable to some due to their experientially-grounded reaction to this context. The historical materialist approach allows us a route into this complexity, as a way of understanding the rationalities of those involved in protest *in relation* to other factors, such as those they are protesting against and certain tactics for this endeavour, such as the Guy Fawkes mask. In the above, the research questions foregrounded have been comprehensively answered. Chapter Five made clear the extent of the mask's deployment and employment. Within Chapter Six the conditions for the mask's availability within the context of Occupy London were detailed, giving a sense of the articulations that enable the mask's use. Chapter Seven demonstrated how this can be understood in relation to hegemony, and the importance of contestation not just between groups but also within them, and how those with different experiential backgrounds react to certain articulations.

In this way, the aim of moving beyond extant social movement theory for an explanation of culture has been met. In particular, the argument here moves us beyond the often

voluntarist and static notions of framing, as the historical and active investment of power can be better understood by understanding lived experience through the notations by which it ties into history. In the process I have demonstrated how variants of post-structuralist and postmodern debates can be critiqued on the basis of a materially-premised set of cultural possibilities. Regarding the common inheritance as the whole, we can better understand how the part, that creative cultural activity, is embedded as a delimited and contested form. Within Occupy London, or at least the protesters interviewed from that movement, the mask made sense, not affirmative sense necessarily, through past notations, drawn into common sense and redirected ideologically. The ideological direction of this was largely met with suspicion and derision, due to its unaccountable and perceptibly unrealistic elements – elements that are also understood in this way due to participants' experience within certain ideologically guided structures of feeling.

8.4 Conclusions and Implications for Future Work

Overall, then, the empirical data obtained within this project – the breadth of the protest event analysis and the specificity of the interview material from participants of Occupy London – enabled me to draw out the theoretical detail in a concrete analysis of a social movement. The view of culture laid out here enables an understanding of the complex and coterminous interplay between material, cultural and social processes, beyond that of new social movement theory. It also allows social movement theorists to understand where exactly their frames come from, how they are forged, and the many ways in which this process can be contested. The research questions posited here effectively convey these criteria, and the answers to them demonstrate how the contextual and historical features of protest constrain what is available and why this may be the case, as seen in the role of the police, and law enforcement policy and practice, and the role of fiction and cultural notations in how this is understood. They also demonstrated how this context and history is the result of continuous human activity working upon what has come before, as with the contestation within Occupy London over particular representations, some of which are deemed more likely to succeed over others.

This research has added a much-needed focus on the Guy Fawkes mask, with an emphasis on its embeddedness within other structures and its availability for employment on the basis of reproduced cultural traces. This is a particular way of analysing practice, which could be adopted with other social movement practices, as well as practices within other activities and fields. The theoretical contribution here is therefore one that can be adopted

elsewhere, perhaps in dialogue with the abstractions made here, for other activities deserving of attention. It is my hope that this research can initiate further discussions in social movement theory around the comprehensiveness and everyday basis of culture, as well as the utility of historical materialism, and the view of practice as constituted of social, material and cultural relations. In this way, the binary between the socio-cultural and the material-rational that has been for a long time pervasive within social movement scholarship can be transcended.

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